

The Path of Moderation

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INTRODUCTION

Hadrat Mufti Ahmad Khānpūrī Sāhib

In these latter times Allāh *ta'ālā* blessed the 'ulamā' of Deoband with the distinguishing mark of establishing a balanced view in the various departments of Dīn, thereby reviving memories of the eras of the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum, Tābi'in and noble predecessors. Take any department of Dīn as an example: the fields of teaching and educating, expressing views and opinions, times of peace and comfort or war and fear, Sufi practices or Tablighī issues – in all these fields they remained firm on a balanced view and presented themselves as living examples of *أمة وسطا* – a balanced nation. A very senior elder, Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib Kāndhlawī Dehlawī rahimahullāh, is a member of this group. Through His absolute power, Allāh *ta'ālā* took extraordinary services from him in the form of the movement of the Tablighī Jamā'at in this century. An example of this is not to be seen in the past. Hadrat freed himself from all occupations and devoted the valuable moments of his life towards the progress of the Jamā'at. When Hadrat departed from this world, its leadership was handed over to Hadratjī Thānī Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Sāhib rahimahullāh. Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib rahimahullāh had personally imposed on Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Sāhib rahimahullāh to be the leader and mentor of the Jamā'at and settle down in the Nizām ad-Dīn Markaz.

Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth rahimahullāh was – at one and the same time – at the head of Islamic madāris, a shaykh in the field of spiritual rectification, and a mentor to the Tablighī Jamā'at. He remained on a path of moderation while supervising these different

departments, and spread his blessings and teachings to many regions. Sayyidī Wa Sanadī Faqīh al-Ummat Hadrat Muftī Mahmūd Hasan Gangohī rahimahullāh makes reference to the comprehensiveness of Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth rahimahullāh in the following couplet from his famous composition titled *Wasf-e-Shaykh*:

He established khānqāhs and madāris everywhere. He despatched well-trained ambassadors in large numbers.

In the last few years, due to the evils of our actions, the imbalances of certain individuals are causing the Tablighī Jamā'at to shift away from the path of moderation of our elders. These individuals believe this work to be Dīn in its entirety, and the absolute shaykh in all matters. They are then moulding the minds of their subordinates in the same way. This attitude of theirs is causing a tumult among those of the Tablighī elders who have a balanced disposition, and doubts and misgivings among the masses. A need was felt to remove the misunderstandings in this regard, and to present to the public the temperament and disposition of our elders with respect to this work.

Coincidentally, our Dār al-Iftā' received a query from the Maharashtra region. It contained 14 questions. The query expressed a conflict between practices of the Tablighī Jamā'at and the Khānqāh. Our respected Muftī 'Abd al-Qayyūm Sāhib Rajkautī (assistant Muftī at Dār al-Iftā' Jāmi'ah Dhābel) prepared a detailed and referenced answer. I was very pleased with it when I read it. My heart poured out with supplications for him. His answer is exactly in line with the temperament of the elders of Deoband and an echo of their hearts.

In the early days of Da'wat Wa Tabligh, when scholars made objections against the Tablighī Jamā'at, it was these Muftīs who provided answers, came to the defence of the Tablighī Jamā'at and fulfilled the responsibility of lending their support to it. Now the same Muftīs are replying to the objections made by unknowing Tablighī brothers against those elders who are occupied in the path of Sufism. In this way, they are fulfilling the responsibility of establishing the truth. This collection is one link of the same chain.

The various groups which are serving Dīn in various ways are mutual supporters, not antagonists. Every balanced-minded person must bear this reality in mind.

The purpose of publishing this fatwā is to remove misunderstandings in this regard and to remind us of the forgotten lessons of moderation of our seniors. Allāh forbid! Allāh forbid! It is not intended to belittle and scorn anyone.

إِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلَّا الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ، وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ، عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ.

All that I desire is reformation as much as I can. The realization of my aim is solely through the help of Allāh. It is in Him that I have placed my trust, and it is to Him that I turn.¹

Ahmad Khānpūrī, may Allāh pardon him.
5 Sha'bān al-Mu'azzam 1435 A.H.

¹ Sūrah Hūd, 11: 88.

QUERY

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Note: For the benefit of the reader, a prelude is presented first. Followed by an answer for each question.

Prelude to The Question

Respected Muftī Aḥmad Sāhib.

As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh

I hope that your respected self is well. I supplicate for your wellness and am in need of your special supplications of the night. I require an answer to an issue which comprises several parts. Kindly provide me with a detailed answer.

All praise is due to Allāh *ta‘ālā*, the department of taṣawwuf and the khānqāh is a department like the many other departments of Dīn. Since a long period of time this department has been quenching the thirst of those who were thirsty for guidance. The Ahlullāh are toiling hard by making efforts on heedless hearts and making them into manifestations of the verse:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

Listen! It is in the remembrance of Allāh that the hearts find tranquillity.

However, a large section of the ummat either totally rejects this system of taṣawwuf and khānqāh or, in the least, is wittingly keeping itself aloof from it. This, despite the fact that this section (which rejects taṣawwuf) is not from among the false creeds. Rather – all praise is due to Allāh *ta‘ālā* – it is attached to the creed of Deoband and the creed of the Markaz of

Nizām ad-Dīn which – in our times – is the successful creed in this world and the Hereafter. Furthermore, it is a true manifestation of

ما أنا عليه وأصحابي

The path on which I [Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] am and on which my Sahābah are.

However, this unknowing section of the ummat is held back because of a few objections and doubts. If a correct solution to these objections is provided in the light of the four sources of law, there is hope for a large section of the ummat to – together with Tablighī practices and matters – increase its inclination towards self-purification, rectification of the heart, and the practices of taṣawwuf, dhikr, sulūk, the khānqāhs and the Ahlullāh; and to cure itself of spiritual maladies.

I therefore request complete and fully referenced answers to the following objections. I will be most grateful for it. If quotations and references are provided, there is hope of even more satisfaction and peace of mind.

The Tablighī Elders And Sulūk

Answer: All praise is due to Allāh *ta’ālā*. Peace and salutations to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam.

Your query is with reference to the present “Tablighī Jamā’at” and “taṣawwuf”. It is necessary to understand the reality of both.

Among the many new things and conditions which have cropped up in our times, ignorance of Islamic sciences has resulted in a large number of people believing Tabligh to be Dīn in its entirety. They did not get the opportunity to observe and taste the special

department of Dīn known as taṣawwuf wherein spiritual attributes and conditions, and purification of the self are taught. The sad point in this regard is that some uninformed people continually make objections against this special department. The most astonishing thing in this regard is that some of these people accept Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib, Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Sāhib and Hadrat Maulānā In'ām al-Hasan Sāhib *rahimahumullāh* as the true leaders of Tablīgh in their respective times, and none of their talks are devoid of the statements of these three personalities. Yet, at the same time they claim that taṣawwuf is in conflict with Tablīgh. Whereas anyone who studied the biography of Hadrat Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh*,¹ his statements,² the biography of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Kāndhlawī *rahimahullāh*,³ and the biography of Hadrat Maulānā In'ām al-Hasan Kāndhlawī *rahimahullāh*⁴ will most definitely be aware of the fact that these personalities were not only bearers of sulūk and taṣawwuf, rather, when they adopted this department, life came into the programme of Da'wat wa Tablīgh.

Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* presented himself in the blessed khānqāh of Quṭb-e-

¹ *Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib Aur Oen Kī Dīnī Da'wat* of Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan 'Alī Nadwī *rahimahullāh*.

² *Malfūzāt Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib* – compiled by Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Manzūr Nu'mānī *rahimahullāh*.

³ *Sawānīh Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Kāndhlawī* of Maulānā Muḥammad Thānī Hasanī *rahimahullāh*.

⁴ *Sawānīh Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad In'ām al-Hasan Kāndhlawī* of Maulānā Muḥammad Shāhid Sahāranpūri.

‘Ālam Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* in 1311 A.H. and pledged bay‘at to him. In those days, Gangoh was the centre for the righteous and erudite scholars. It was through the company of these personalities and of Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* himself that Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* gained prominence. The influence which those effective companionships and assemblies had in the development of his religious sentiments, understanding of Dīn and its correct methodology is not unknown to people of knowledge and wisdom.

The blessings of that initial khānqāh environment remained with the Maulānā in his religious and spiritual life. The best time when a person’s life can be affected and influenced by a place and environment was the time when Hadrat Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* spent in Gangoh. He was a 10 to 11-year old child when he arrived in Gangoh, and was 20 years old when Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* passed away in 1323 A.H. Thus, he spent about ten years in the company of Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh*.¹

After the demise of Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* requested Shaykh al-Hind Hadrat Maulānā Maḥmūd Hasan Deobandī *rahimahullāh* to accept his bay‘at. The latter advised him to revert to Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sahāranpūrī *rahimahullāh*. Subsequently, he established his link with him, traversed the stations of sulūk under his tutorship and guidance, and was conferred with khilāfat.²

¹ *Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib Aur Oen Kī Dīnī Da‘wat*, p. 53.

² *Ibid.* pp. 57-58. Also *Tadhkiratul Khalīl*, p. 429.

Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Sāhib rahimhullāh and Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad In‘ām al-Hasan Sāhib rahimhullāh requested Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib rahimhullāh to accept their bay‘at. Hadrat Maulānā accepted their request and said: “May Allāh *ta‘ālā* bless it. Allāh willing, it will certainly be blessed.” Two days before his demise in 1363 A.H., Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib rahimhullāh conferred permission and khilāfat to Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Sāhib rahimhullāh.¹

On the last day of his life, Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib rahimhullāh conferred permission and khilāfat to Hadrat Maulānā In‘ām al-Hasan Sāhib rahimhullāh in the presence of many ‘ulamā’ and mashā’ikh.²

The Spiritual Strength of The Tablīghī Elders

The spiritual strength of these elders in Tablīgh was so powerful that it is difficult for the Tablīghīs of today to accept and understand it. However, the point is absolute and the narrators are reliable; so there is no alternative but to accept it. The great muballigh and senior dā’ī, Hadrat Maulānā ‘Ubaydullāh Sāhib Balyāwī rahimhullāh says:

Hadrat (Shāh ‘Abd al-Qādir) Rāipūrī rahimhullāh said with reference to Hadrat Shaykh (Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib rahimhullāh): “The affinity of his shaykh flies to him. The special qualities

¹ *Sawānīh* Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Kāndhlawī, p. 191, 207.

² *Sawānīh* Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad In‘ām al-Hasan Kāndhlawī, p. 228.

which Allāh *ta'ālā* blessed him have not been given to even the Sufi masters of today.” He adds: “He makes sure he takes a person with him and only leaves him once he had conveyed him [to Allāh]. When Allāh *ta'ālā* has conveyed you to such a shaykh, you must strive with a genuine quest. It is not far fetched for Allāh *ta'ālā* to transfer a spiritual bond very quickly to you. In other words, you must not strive with the intention of receiving khilāfat. Rather, strive with the intention of establishing a bond with Allāh *ta'ālā*. If you do this, the spiritual bond will be transferred very quickly to you. Allāh willing, you will then develop a personal bond with Allāh *ta'ālā*.

My dear elders and friends! Initially I used to think to myself that Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Sāhib *rahimahullāh* has no connection with taṣawwuf, and that he was just as he is. However, when I attended his lectures, I found that many senior Sufi masters and Auliya' had their constipation cured.

Hadrat Pīr Shāh Ya'qūb Nannhe Khān Bhopālī Sāhib relates his own story: He was suffering from constipation on one occasion. During that period, the moment his eyes fell on the face of Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in Delhi, his constipation disappeared.

The following is an incident about Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Sāhib *rahimahullāh*: There was a senior shaykh

in Bhāwalpūr who related that Hadrat Maulānā Yūsuf Sāhib was delivering the Friday khuṭbah. While listening to it, his constipation was cured. Allāh *ta'ālā* conferred Hadrat Shaykh with a very high rank. Just sit for a short while in his company and look at his face, and your constipation will be cured.¹

I (Hadrat Maulānā 'Ubaydullāh Sāhib) asked Hadrat Rāipūrī *rahimahullāh*: “What is the meaning of nisbat?” He replied: “It refers to having consciousness of Allāh *ta'ālā* without any sounds, letters and words.” I said: “Hadrat! We have knowledge of Allāh *ta'ālā* through words and sounds.” Hadrat said: “Such and such Maulwī Sāhib enjoys this condition.” I said: “Hadrat! We are engrossed in Tablīgh and we live in the midst of all activities. How can we ever acquire this?” He said: “As long as Tablīgh is not accompanied by solitude, it [Tablīgh] will be nothing but qawwālī (words).” I am not saying this about myself and those who are occupied in Tablīgh. However, it is written with reference to Hadrat Maulānā In'am al-Hasan Sāhib that he engages in so much of dhikr and Qur'ān recitation that when he comes out of solitude and goes to the public, people say: “It seems as if he is experiencing solitude in public.” This too is a term used by the Sufis.²

¹ *Mawā'iz 'Ubaydiyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 543-544.

² *Ibid.* vol. 1, pp. 344-345.

The Tablīghī Jamā'at in The Khānqāhs

Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* initiated the work of Tablīgh so that the madāris may receive more students and the khānqāhs may receive more murīds. During his final illness, he said to Maulānā Shāh 'Aṭā'ullāh Bukhārī *rahimahullāh*:

This is our movement and this is what we say to everybody: Once this work catches on, thousands more madāris will be opened and thousands more khānqāhs will be established.¹

Where khānqāhs were already established in his era, Maulānā Ilyās *rahimahullāh* paid particular attention to sending jamā'ats to those areas (such as Hadrat Shāh 'Abd al-Qādir Rāipūrī *rahimahullāh* in Rāipūr and Hakīm al-Ummat Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* in Thānah Bhawan). When he used to send them, he would advise them thus:

Do not make mention of Tablīgh in the assemblies of the elders. About 50-60 people must engage in gusht in the surrounding villages. They must then assemble in the town on the eighth day and divide themselves to go to the villages. If the elders ask you anything, you must answer them; but do not say anything of your own accord.

Shaykh al-Hadīth Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes in a letter:

I have a very long-held wish. Acting under specific principles, the jamā'ats must

¹ *Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib Aur Oen Kī Dīnī Da'wat*, pp. 296-297.

derive benefit from the Sufi masters in the khānqāhs while upholding and adopting the etiquette of the khānqāh. At the same time, the work of tablīgh must continue in the surrounding villages at specified times.¹

It is either due to a misfortune or ignorance that the attitude of the Tablighīs of today is that ‘ulamā’ or khānqāh people who take a part in the Tablighī programmes are considered to be their people; while those who do not take part are considered to be unused and foreign particles even if such people happen to be a Shaykh al-Ḥadīth in a Dār al-‘Ulūm or a senior Sufi master in a khānqāh.

Ḥadrat Maulānā Ilyās’s Moderation

This type of extremism was not prevalent in the era of Ḥadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Ḥadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Manzūr Nu‘mānī *rahimahullāh* says:

Hakīm al-Ummat Ḥadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* had passed away just a few days ago. A person who had pledged bay‘at to him came to visit [Ḥadrat Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib]. When I introduced the man to Ḥadrat [Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib], he said:

We have to think about a general and public condolence for a personality who had as large a following as that of Ḥadrat Thānwī *quddisa sirruhu*. My heart desires that we should offer condolences to all of

¹ *Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib Aur Oen Kī Dīnī Da’wat*, pp. 124-125.

Hadrat [Thānwī's] associates and that we should make special efforts to announce:

The best and most powerful means of increasing a bond with Hadrat, deriving benefit from his blessings, striving to increase his ranks, and sending joy to his soul is to remain firm and steadfast on Hadrat's true teachings and guidelines, and to endeavour to spread and proliferate them as much as possible. The more a person acts on Hadrat's teachings, then based on the following Hadīth, the more Hadrat's treasure of good deeds and lofty ranks will increase:

من دعا إلى حسنة فله أجرها وأجر من عملها

The one invites towards a good act shall receive its reward and the reward of the one who practises on it.

He then said: "This is the best way of ṭṣā-l-e-thawāb – conveying rewards."

Just look at Maulānā's balanced temperament. He advised that as much efforts as possible be made to proliferate the teachings of Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh. In other words, he advised the proliferation of the work of purification of the self.

A Practice to Remove The Grime of The Heart

After going to the khānqāhs and spending time with the Sufi masters, it becomes clear to a person that by mixing and intermingling with the masses, a type of grime accumulates on the heart. This grime is washed away when a person spends time in the company of the Sufi masters. This was a practice adopted by

Hadrat Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and he used to instruct his fellow Tablīghī associates to adopt it. Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes with reference to Hadrat Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh*:

My respected uncle *quddisa sirruhu* [referring to Hadrat Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib] had one permanent practice. It is a very fine point. Whenever he used to return from a Tablīghī ijtimā', he would certainly undertake a journey to Rāipūr. If he could not, he would certainly go to Sahāranpūr. If he did not get an opportunity of going to either of the two, he would observe i'tikāf for three days in his musjid. He used to say in this regard: "In the course of the various gatherings and being in the company of people all the time, a type of griminess develops on my temperament and heart. I do this [go to Rāipūr, Sahāranpūr or observe i'tikāf] in order to wash it off." I was dictating these words when Maulānā Muḥammad Manzūr Nu'mānī incidentally arrived from Deoband. He is present at the moment also. He said to me: "This subject is mentioned in the same words in the *Malfūzāt* of Hadrat Dehlawī [Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib]." I therefore asked someone to bring my respected uncle's *Malfūzāt*. It contained the following words:

"When I have to go to Mewāt, I always go in the company of pious people and people of dhikr. Despite this, intermingling with the masses causes such a change in my

heart that as long as I do not wash it off through i'tikāf, or do not go to Sahāranpūr or Rāipūr for a few days and remain in that special environment, my heart does not return to its original condition.”

He used to occasionally say to others: “Those who are moving around for the sake of Dīn, going for gusht and 40 days must wash off the natural effects of all this by engaging in dhikr and fikr in solitude.”¹

It becomes absolutely clear from the above lines that the Tablighī elders had a very strong bond with the department of purification and Allāh-consciousness. Why should they not have it?! After all, they are important parts of the duties of prophet-hood – as will be explained further on. If there is no attachment to this department, the work of Tabligh can never be in line with the work of prophet-hood.

An Astonishing Attitude of Certain Present-Day Tablighī Elders Towards The Khānqāh And The Mashā'ikh

Despite the above, some of the elders of the Markaz at Nizām ad-Dīn have the following astonishing attitude: They consider a bond of rectification with the khānqāh and mashā'ikh to be a cause of weakness in the Tablighī work. According to them, when a person becomes attached to the work of Tabligh, purification of the self is automatically realized. The one who is not convinced of this has not understood Tabligh correctly. These elders have initiated an entire attack against establishing a bond of rectification with the mashā'ikh. They first initiated this attack among their

¹ *Āp Betī*, vol. 1, pp. 465-466.

close Tablighī associates, and then went on to put an end to the importance of a bond with the mashā'ikh via public lectures. A few sentences of one of their talks are quoted here:

The said speaker pondered deeply over the reason for Tablighī brothers losing interest in the work and slipping away. He came up with two reasons and expressed intense pain over them.

(1) The 'ulamā' say to the [Tablighī] workers: All these virtues [which you read about Tabligh] are actually virtues of jihād. These verses are related to jihād.

(2) People do not believe that purification can be realized through this work. It is ignorance to think that there is no self-purification in Tabligh, even if the one who says it is a Sufī master. We must do this work while thinking of ourselves as self-reformers. Our gazes are now turning to the right and left for rectification. I am astounded when people ask me: "With whom do you have a bond of rectification?" Why don't you say: "My bond of rectification is with this work [of Tabligh]?" A person came to me and said: "I require one month's leave to observe i'tikāf in my shaykh's company." I replied: "You are attached to this work for 40 years. Why did you not combine 'ibādat with da'wat as yet?" If a person asks for leave from da'wat in order to engage in 'ibādat, how will he progress in 'ibādat without da'wat?

He said with reference to the mashā'ikh of the khānqāhs:

They have the illness of wanting to become shaykhs and attracting people to themselves. This is pride.

Mountains of Personal Actions Are Smaller Than The Small Particles of Collective Actions

The said speaker related an incident in his talk. The objective of which was: Leave aside the individual practices which you do in the company of the Sufis in the khānqāhs and become attached to this work (of Tabligh). This is more important.

This incident concerns Hadrat Muftī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn Fayṣal Ābādī, a graduate of Jāmi‘ah Islāmīyyah, Dhābel. A major portion of his life was spent in Da‘wat wa Tabligh. His talks used to be enthusiastically attended in the international Ijtimā‘ of Rāiwīnd (in Pakistan) and in other countries. The incident is as follows:

Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said to Muftī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn Sāhib on one occasion: “A jamā‘at will be arriving soon. You will have to take it.” There were still three days before this jamā‘at could arrive in the Markaz of Nizām ad-Dīn. Muftī Sāhib said: “I will go for these three days to Hadrat Shāh ‘Abd al-Qādir Sāhib in Rāipūr and return.” Hadrat Maulānā granted him permission and he went. He experienced so much of effulgence and blessings in the khānqāh of Hadrat Rāipūrī that his heart was affected and he stayed over for more than three days. In the meantime, the jamā‘at arrived at the Markaz and Hadrat Maulānā [Ilyās Sāhib] was restless because Muftī Sāhib had not returned as yet. Hadrat Maulānā wrote a letter to Hadrat Shaykh (Maulānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā Sāhib) in Sahāranpūr, describing the situation to him. Hadrat Shaykh went

personally to Rāipūr and addressed Muftī Sāhib saying: “Why did you get stuck here? My uncle is worried and waiting for you.” Muftī Sāhib replied: “I am really enjoying myself here.” Ḥadrat Shaykh said: “Mountains of personal actions are smaller than the small particles of collective actions.”

The speaker added: “I am most grieved at those people who say that the entire Dīn is not in the six points. The one who says this is spoiling his own milk. He can never be a businessman.”

One particular statement of the elder – the essence of whose talk is being quoted – requires the attention of the ‘ulamā’. He said:

“Why are you impressed by the talks of an ‘ālim who is not in this work (of Tabligh)?”¹

Mere Attachment to a Dīnī Movement is Not Sufficient For Purification

The objective of the above talk is clear: Attachment to the Tablighī movement is enough for the purification of a person, there is no need to go to any shaykh.

Our response in this regard is that mere attachment to a Dīnī movement and group is not sufficient for a person’s reformation. There is no need for us to go too far back in history. Let’s look at India itself. The ‘ulamā’ are fully aware of the movement of jihād and rectification of Ḥadrat Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd *rahimahullāh* which was initiated about 200 years ago. The devotion to Allāh *ta‘ālā*, sincerity, unity and harmony, and administration which were created by it are well known. The fourth chapter of *Sīrat Sayyid*

¹ Quotations from the talk end here. I have a recording of the exact talk. (compiler)

Aḥmad Shahīd (of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan 'Alī Nadwī *rahimahullāh*) is sufficient to understand this.

His movement caused such a revolution that waves of Islamic sentiment and action struck from the boundary of Bengal to Punjab, and from the mountains of Nepal to the shores of the salty oceans. Astounding scenes of unity were observed. Most of the mujāhidīn and muballighīn in Sayyid Sāhib's movement had pledged bay'at to him. If mere attachment to a Dīnī movement is sufficient for one's rectification, there would have been no need for them to pledge bay'at to him and Sayyid Sāhib *rahimahullāh* would not have conducted assemblies of bay'at in so many places.

The Qur'ānic verses and Aḥādīth on jihād applied fully to the mujāhidīn who joined the movement of Sayyid Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Whereas these verses and Aḥādīth apply to those in Tablīgh after some explanation and their knowledge too is on the surface, then it is wishful thinking to assume that their rectification will be realized solely through the work of Da'wat wa Tablīgh. If we were to accept their claim that when a person occupies himself in Tablīgh in accordance with the principles, then his purification is realized automatically; then this would mean that the elders and seniors of Tablīgh merely went to pass their time with their respective shaykhs!

The Present Tablīgh is Not Dīn in Totality

Moreover, if we have to accept the above claim, it would essentially mean that the present form of Tablīgh bears:

جميع ما جاء به النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم.

Everything which Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam came with.

It will be correct to say that Tablīgh is an effort to revive “Everything which Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam came with” and that this is its objective. But it is not correct to say that Tablīgh bears “Everything which Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam came with” (including purification and rectification). To claim that the six points of Tablīgh is Dīn in totality is so obviously wrong that there is no need to provide proofs for it. Nonetheless, a few statements of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib rahimahullāh are presented in this regard:

(1)

The fundamental objective of our movement is to teach Muslims:

جميع ما جاء به النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم.

(In other words, to connect the ummat to the total academic and practical system of Islam). This is our fundamental objective. As for the caravans going out for 40 days, Tablīghī gusht and so on – these are the initial means for the realization of this objective. Teaching the kalimah and ṣalāh is – so to speak – the abc of our entire syllabus. It is also obvious that our caravans cannot do all the work.¹

(2)

If it is observed that the ‘ulamā’ and Sufīs of a place are not turning to this work in a supportive manner,

¹ *Malfūzāt Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib*, p. 32.

do not give any place in your heart for ill-feelings towards them.¹

(3)

To have bad thoughts unnecessarily about even an ordinary Muslim can cast a person into destruction. Making objections against 'ulamā' is far more severe.²

(4)

The work of 'ilm and dhikr has not been grasped by our workers as yet. I am very concerned about this. The only solution is to send them to the 'ulamā' and people of dhikr.³

I request people of knowledge and insight to ponder over the quotations from the speech of the previously mentioned speaker and say with justness: Will this talk take ordinary Tablighī workers closer to the 'ulamā' and mashā'ikh or will it keep them aloof from them? Has this talk not shifted away from the approach and system of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Ṣāhib rahimahullāh and other balanced elders of Tabligh? It has certainly shifted away from their approach.

Bringing The Masses And 'Ulamā' Together Through Practical Wisdom

The effect of the efforts and practical wisdom of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Ṣāhib rahimahullāh and Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Ṣāhib rahimahullāh was that the masses and large businessmen who had been aloof from the 'ulamā' for

¹ *Malfūzāt Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Ṣāhib*, p. 36.

² *Ibid.* p. 56.

³ *Ibid.* p. 57.

many years began presenting themselves respectfully before the 'ulamā' to obtain solutions to their problems. Furthermore, they began taking the 'ulamā' with absolute respect and admiration to their Tablighī assemblies and functions.

Hadrat Maulānā Abūl Hasan 'Alī Nadwī *rahimahullāh* was nurtured through his constant company with Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and through his deep bond with him. He had the opportunity of observing and studying the Tablighī movement very closely. Look at what he writes:

On one hand, Maulānā (Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh*) used to emphasise on the 'ulamā' to bring the masses closer to Islam through this work and to develop a concern for it in their hearts. On the other side, he constantly drew the attention of the masses towards recognizing the rank of the 'ulamā', to value them and to take benefit from them. He used to emphasise on them to present themselves at the service of the 'ulamā' in line with the principles. He used to explain the rewards for meeting and visiting the 'ulamā'. He used to explain to them the etiquette and principles of serving them. He used to teach them how to invite them, derive benefit from them and keep them occupied. He habituated the masses to have noble thoughts about the 'ulamā' in matters which they did not understand about the 'ulamā'. He used to send them to serve the 'ulamā'. On returning, he would ask them of what transpired and what was discussed. He would then rectify

their criticisms and impressions [of the ‘ulamā’]. In this way, he brought the traders and businessmen so close to the ‘ulamā’ that it was probably unprecedented (after the khilāfat movement).¹

Experts For Each Field

The following statement of the said speaker is unacceptable: “There is no need to go to a shaykh for purification of the self. Purification is automatically achieved through the Tablighī movement, the work of da‘wat and dhikr.” The evil and corrupt qualities which are found within a person are known as *radhā’il*. These can only be rectified through an expert shaykh.

لكل فنّ رجال

In order to acquire a certain discipline, it is necessary to go to the expert of that discipline.

This is supported by verses of the Qur’ān. The Qur’ān lists Allāh’s favours on Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, three of which are specifically mentioned (details in this regard will be given further on). One of them is:

وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ

He purifies them (from polytheism and other evils).²

These same qualities are mentioned in Sūrah al-Jumu‘ah, verse 20. The same is also mentioned in a supplication which Hadrat Ibrāhīm ‘*alayhis salām* had

¹ *Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib Aur Oen Kī Dīnī Da‘wat*, pp. 154-155.

² Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān, 3: 164.

made in favour of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam.

Just ponder! In all three instances the subject of the verb [of purification] is Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam.

The speaker whose statements have been quoted previously was delivering this talk to people who do not have knowledge of the Qur'ānic sciences, who have superficial knowledge of Islam, and whose knowledge is not beyond the circle of the six points. After listening to this talk, will they not feel that they have no need for a jurist nor for a shaykh? Because, according to him, the Tablīghī work is: *Shaykh al-Kul fī al-Kul* - the shaykh of everyone in every matter.

The entire effort and endeavour of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was that if the 'ulamā' do not increase their bond with the masses through this work, a gulf will come as an obstacle between the 'ulamā' and the masses. In other words, the masses will get cut off from the 'ulamā'. On the other hand, every word and sentence of the above-mentioned talk is creating a wide gulf and aloofness between the masses and the 'ulamā'. How sorrowful!

A Reply to The Previously-Related Incident

We now come back to that incident in which Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth *rahimahullāh* said to Muftī Zayn al-'Ābidīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh*: "Mountains of personal actions are smaller than the small particles of collective actions."

The conclusion which was drawn from this statement is that individual practices (such as seclusion for dhikr and spiritual practices, and spending time in the khānqāh) hold no value in comparison to collective

actions (such as Tablīghī activities). This conclusion is not correct for the following reasons:

(1)

Allāh *ta'ālā* addresses the greatest muballigh, Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*:

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ وَإِلَى رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ

Once you complete the task of inviting to the truth and conveying the injunctions, you must prepare for (another) task. That is, become occupied in *ṣalāh*, dhikr of Allāh, *du'ā'* and *istighfār*.

This is the explanation given by most commentators. Other explanations are also given but the closest is the one given above. The essence of it is that Rasūlullāh's greatest worship was *da'wat wa tabligh*, showing Allāh's creation the path to Allāh *ta'ālā* and worrying about their rectification. However, this worship is for the sake of the creation, to direct himself to their rectification and to make efforts in this regard. The purpose of this verse is that he must not be satisfied with this indirect worship. Rather, whenever he gets free time, he must turn to direct worship by going into solitude and then direct himself towards Allāh *ta'ālā*. From here, he must make *du'ā'* for success in every other task. The actual purpose for which man has been created is to worship and remember Allāh *ta'ālā* directly. It is probably for this reason that mention is made of free time from the first indirect form of worship. It means that it is a task for the fulfilment of a certain purpose, and a person can get free time from it. As for the second task – directing one's self to Allāh *ta'ālā* – it is something from which a believer never gets free time. Rather, his entire life has to be spent in it.

We learn from this that the ‘ulamā’ who are occupied in teaching, tabligh and rectification of people must not be neglectful in this regard. They have to set aside a special time for solitude wherein they turn to Allāh *ta’ālā* and engage in His remembrance. The lives of the ‘ulamā’ of the past bear testimony to this aspect. Teaching and tabligh are not effective in the absence of this aspect. There is no effulgence and blessing in its absence.¹

(2)

Saying such a thing is in itself in contradiction to the practice and way of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib rahimahullāh. After returning from a Tablīghī ijtimā’, he used to go to Rāipūr to wash off the grime which built up in his heart. Reference to this was made previously from *Āp Betī*.

(3)

This incident took place before Indian independence. It was during the early stages of the Tablīghī Jamā’at when its activities were restricted to just a few regions. There was a dearth of ‘ulamā’ in the Jamā’at. This can be gauged from the following text of Maulānā Muḥammad Manzūr Nu’mānī Sāhib rahimahullāh.

Up to now, there is a dearth of ‘ulamā’ and Sufis in the Tablīghī jamā’ats which are being sent out. Hadrat (Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib rahimahullāh) was quite concerned about this. If only the ‘ulamā’ and Sufis could also join these jamā’ats and do the work so that this deficiency could be removed. All praise is

¹ *Ma’ārif al-Qur’ān*, vol. 8, pp. 772-773.

due to Allāh *ta'ālā*, 'ulamā' and Sufis are present in the Markaz-e-Tablīgh, but they are few in number. If they were to go out with every jamā'at, who will carry out the work in the Markaz?¹

We learn from this that Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth *rahimahullāh* made this statement in the light of the needs of the time and the volatile situation.

In academic terms, it could be said: In order to save the masses from Dīnī harm, the harm to a special person is not considered.

(4)

Hadrat Muftī Zayn al-'Ābidīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* had already acquired that part of purification which is *fard-e-'ayn* (details of which will be provided later on). A major indication of this is that he experienced so much of effulgence and blessings in the khānqāh of Hadrat Rāipūrī *rahimahullāh* that he did not feel like leaving the place. It is difficult for a person to develop such a condition without purity of his internal self. Therefore, this incident cannot be used as proof for the person whose internal condition is not of this level.

(5)

We will also have to look at the personal actions and general attitude of the person who made the statement (i.e. Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth *rahimahullāh*) with regard to Tablīgh and the khānqāh system. His blessed life and teachings are like an open book presented to the people of the khānqāh and those occupied in Tablīgh. In order to understand a person's

¹ *Malfūzāt Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās*, pp. 46-47.

statement correctly, it is most essential to observe and study his personal practices. It will be most extremist to quote just one statement, make a conclusion from it, and to measure his personality from it.

The 'ulamā' know fully well that Hadrat Shaykh's entire life was spent in teaching, writing, da'wat wa tabligh, and rectification and instruction. Towards the end of his life this concern and grief had overpowered his heart and mind that the decline of the ummat and retrogression in every department of Dīn stemmed from negligence in Allāh's remembrance, alienation from His dhikr, and the barrenness of the khānqāhs. Consequently, in the final period of his life, he made it his mission to revive the khānqāh life, had countless khānqāhs established in various places through his associates, and undertook their supervision.

***Fadā'il-e-A'māl* – A Comprehensive Specimen of Taṣawwuf**

In the course of its various activities, the Jamā'at needed a book around which all levels of Muslim society can rally collectively, develop the mind towards a correct and genuine Dīnī life, without there being the slightest taint of disunity and disharmony. Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh* compiled *Fadā'il-e-A'māl* to this end. Its translations in Arabic, English and various other languages were published. In many places of the book, Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh* clarified the importance of the company of the Ahlullāh, developing a bond with them and the khānqāh. He reprimanded those who made statements against the khānqāh. In his commentary and explanation of Aḥādīth, there are so many statements, life-conditions and stories of the Sufis that the book appears to be a comprehensive specimen in the field of taṣawwuf. Unfortunately, there is a deficiency in teaching these aspects since

the past few years. We cannot quote all the places in the book where taṣawwuf is discussed. A few are presented to serve as examples:

1. In the chapter on stories of the Sahābah, the story of Hadrat Abū Talḥah radīyallāhu ‘anhu is related about how he bequeathed his orchard because thoughts of it came in his ṣalāh. Commentary: Types of spiritual bond of the Sufis...(p. 76)

The story of Hadrat Abū Hurayrah radīyallāhu ‘anhu memorizing Aḥādīth is related. Commentary: The Aṣ-ḥāb aṣ-Ṣuffah refers to those people who – so to speak – resided in the khānqāh of Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam...(p. 110)

2. In the chapter on the virtues of ṣalāh, on the virtues of ṣalāh with congregation: The importance of 40 days in the sight of the Sufis. (p. 46)

3. In the chapter on the virtues of tablīgh (1st section): The Sufis call towards Allāh ta‘ālā through cognition of internal actions. (condensed, p. 290)

4. In the chapter on the virtues of dhikr (2nd section), Aḥādīth on dhikr: What great value these khānqāhs have in the sight of Allāh! The very same khānqāhs against which verbal abuses are presently hurled from all sides...(p. 394)

Proof for the Sufis and mashā’ikh for instructing their murids to engage in collective dhikr. (p. 394)

Practising pās anfās (p. 404).

The kashf (exposition) of the Sufis. Chapter three, section one (p. 466)

5. In the chapter on the virtues of the Qur’ān: Three ways of acquiring sulūk ilallāh, i.e. the rank of iḥsān (complete Allāh consciousness). (p. 527)

Refer to *Fadā'il-e-A'māl* for the above-quoted extracts and read them carefully.

The life conditions, statements and incidents of the Sufis are so profusely found in this book that it is difficult to encompass them. Will a person whose book is filled with references and stories of the khānqāh and people of the khānqāh ask every person in every situation to leave solitude and go out in jamā'at? The fact of the matter is that there was a balance in the temperament of Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadith *rahimahullāh*. He had the ability to recognize and identify people's temperaments. He was neither of the view that all the departments of Dīn should be cast aside and full devotion be accorded to going out in jamā'at, nor was he of the view that 'ulamā' and people of the khānqāh have no need to attach themselves to Da'wat and Tablīgh. Rather he always wished for the khānqāh and Tablīgh to be as closely united as possible. The following is an extract from one of his letters:

I have a very long-held wish. Acting under specific principles, the jamā'ats must derive benefit from the Sufi masters in the khānqāhs while upholding and adopting the etiquette of the khānqāh...

This was quoted previously and serves as a just testimony.

Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadith *rahimahullāh* inherited this balance from his beloved uncle, Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. A most reliable narrator, Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Manzūr Nu'mānī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, relates:

(Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh*) said on one occasion:

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī's work was phenomenal. My heart desires that the teachings be his, and the way of tabligh be mine. In this way his teachings will become universal.¹

Just ponder! The wish of Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth *rahimahullāh* is the same as that of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Study the words of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* carefully. He has the desire to proliferate the teachings of Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* by combining the khānqāh and tabligh. He did not say: “My tabligh will become universal.” In other words, he did not want the continued existence of his own jamā'at and the extinction of others.

A Valuable Advice of Maulānā Aḥmad 'Alī Lāhorī

On one occasion, Shaykh al-Islam wa at-Tafsīr Imām al-Auliya' Hadrat Maulānā Aḥmad 'Alī Lāhorī *rahimahullāh* advised Hadratjī Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Sāhib *rahimahullāh* as follows:

Remember one point! The first step of a true group towards falsehood is when it starts to think that no other group is on the truth except itself. And that the continued existence of our group is dependent on the extinction of other groups. Watch out! Do not allow such sentiments to develop in your jamā'at. We make du'ā' for you people all the time – that Allāh *ta'ālā* must forever and ever

¹ *Malfūzāt Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās*, p. 58.

keep this garden of Maulānā Muḥammad
Ilyās Sāhib rahimahullāh green and lush.¹

Examples of Hadrat Shaykh's Moderation From His Own Letters

Assuming Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam were to come into the world now, which work will he adopt?

(1)

A letter from Maulwī 'Abdullāh Sāhib Mazāhiri

Hadrat Sayyidī Maulā'ī, *dāmat anwāruhum al-'āliyah*

As-salāmu 'alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh

I was honoured to receive your august letter. Just recently the thought came to my mind that assuming Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam were to come into the world now, which work of Dīn will he adopt? Will he engage in Tabligh, start teaching, sit down to write and compile books or will he establish a khānqāh? This servant is fully convinced that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam will turn away from everything and focus on repairing this dilapidated palace. Not only will he merely focus on this task but give his life for it. The reason for this is that the sacrifices that were made in the construction of this palace are not unknown to any person having some pain for this Dīn. When Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam used to be so restless and be pained over the condition of outsiders [non-Muslims], what must his feelings be over the condition of his own followers!? It is quite difficult to gauge this correctly. My respected sir! There is presently a need to sacrifice everything for the sake of the Dīn of Rasūlullāh

¹ *Shaykh al-Hadīth Number*, as quoted from *Husn-e-Tadbīr*, February 2012.

sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. It is impossible to revive the Dīn of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam without obliterating one's self. What effect it must be having on his pure heart when the deeds of his appalling ummat are presented to him! I cannot describe what thoughts pass my heart when I think of this. My respected sir! Get this sinful servant sacrificed in this path. That is all.

Reply from Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā Sāhib quddisa sirruhu:

There is no need to waste time in futile thoughts of this nature. Whether it is teaching, the khānqāh, and so on – all these are for the sake of fulfilling the work of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. Do you think that if the department of teaching and educating is closed, and everyone becomes involved in this work, knowledge will remain? The thing regarding which Allāh *ta'ālā* said: “فَلَوْ لَا نَفَرْنَا”¹ and warned us thereby should never be considered superficial. Just as this is an important duty, so is the khānqāh and other departments. Be grateful to Allāh *ta'ālā* for having enabled you to attach yourself to one important work. The way of showing your gratitude is for you to remain fully attached to it. Disregarding other types of work is actually an attack from Shayṭān. You must continue trying to save yourself from this attack. Did

¹ Reference is made to the following verse:

فَلَوْ لَا نَفَرْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ ذِي قُوَّةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ.

Why, then, did a section from each group not go forth so that they may acquire an understanding of religion and inform their people when they return to them so that they might be on their guard? (Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 122)-(translator)

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam not go into solitude for several days at a time? This is in fact the life in the khānqāh. Rasūlullāh’s comprehensive being was able to carry out all types of work simultaneously. If other weak people cannot combine all his tasks, it is not a deficiency. Thoughts of this nature are the harbingers of pride.

That is all.

Muḥammad Zakariyyā

12 Muḥarram 1369 A.H.¹

Which is better – Tablīgh or dhikr?

(2)

Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh* wrote to one of his associates, Maulānā Muḥammad Aḥmad Batlah, a resident of Rāiwind (Pakistan)

I emphatically direct the attention of Tablīghīs towards dhikr (i.e. towards the khānqāh people) and the khānqāh people towards Tablīgh. When anyone asks me: “Which is better, Tablīgh or dhikr?” I reply: “From food and drink, which is more important?” I teach the Tablīghīs the importance of dhikr, and the khānqāh people the importance of Tablīgh. The foolish ones on both sides consider it below their dignity to do the other. These foolish fellows do not realize that they are already doing the work in which they are occupied. I direct them towards what they are deficient in...You must show this letter of mine to Maulwī Iḥsān and others. You must also say to them: They must pay particular attention to both aspects. They must not

¹ *Tarbīyyatus Sālikīn*, pp. 417-418.

leave out one for the sake of the other. You must continue emphasising this to your friends.¹

Continue frequenting the Tablighī Markaz

(3)

Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh* wrote to one of his associates, Janāb Maulwī ‘Abd al-Bārī Sāhib Madrāsī:

Concern for Dīn also constitutes Dīn. There is certainly a need for this and I wrote about it before. That is, you must take out time periodically and frequent Nizām ad-Dīn (the Markaz of the Tablighī Jamā‘at).²

Do not scorn the one engaged in dhikr

(4)

Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yahyā Sāhib Madanī, who was totally devoted to Tabligh, had first pledged bay‘at to Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Sāhib Kāndhlawī *rahimahullāh*. He then renewed his bay‘at at the hands of Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh*.

Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh* addressed him and another special associate with absolute importance: “Listen carefully! If a person does not join Tabligh and is occupied in dhikr, you must not scorn him.”³

The Tablighī Markaz has been turned into a khānqāh

(5)

The amīr of the Tablighī Jamā‘at in Kānpūr and some of his associates decided that attention must be given to dhikr in the Tablighī Jamā‘at. Twenty six persons

¹ *Tarbīyyatus Sālikīn*, pp. 463-464.

² *Ibid.* p. 350.

³ *Ibid.* p. 751.

gave their names for this. Some of these had pledged bay'at to Hadrat Rāipūrī *rahimahullāh*, some to Hakīm al-Islām Hadrat Qārī Muhammad Tayyib Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and some to Hadrat Maulānā 'Alī Miyā Sāhib [Abul Hasan 'Alī Nadwī] *rahimahullāh*. They were divided into three jamā'ats and the times for dhikr were set for after maghrib and after 'ishā. It was also decided that on the seventh day – the day of the Tablighī ijtimā' - they will have a collective dhikr in the latter part of the night. Hadrat Aqdas Muftī Maḥmūd Sāhib Gangohī *rahimahullāh* was requested to supervise all this. Hadrat Muftī Sāhib wrote all the details and asked Hadrat Shaykh *rahimahullāh* who wrote the following reply:

My heart really desires for this programme to be initiated. May Allāh *ta'ālā* help us and may He enable this programme to continue through you.¹

Do you see! The Tablighī Markaz is being given the identity of a khānqāh.

An Announcement: Give Time in Tabligh

Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth *rahimahullāh* asked for the following announcement to be made in a certain gathering: “Some people are under the assumption that Tabligh and Tasawwuf are two separate entities. I am making a public announcement: This is generally not correct because I am personally involved in Tabligh and with Tasawwuf. Some mashā'ikh stop their murīds from getting attached to Tabligh by saying that it contradicts unity in purpose. Their prohibition is not a universal rule and principle. Rather, different mashā'ikh and elders have their own

¹ *Tarbīyyatus Sālikīn*, pp. 156-157.

temperaments. Their prohibition in this regard is similar to a doctor prohibiting certain patients from consuming sugar, others from water and so on. It is totally wrong to assume that this prohibition applies to every single person. Or take the example of Hakīm Mas‘ūd Ahmad prohibiting my uncle from drinking water. He abstained from drinking for seven continuous years. It will be totally wrong to consider this to be a general rule. I belong to Hadrat [Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib] *quddisa sirruhu* and I also have permission from Hadrat Rāipūrī *rahimahullāh*. I will therefore say very emphatically that as far as possible, you must give time in Tablīgh.¹

The Shar‘ī Status of Taṣawwuf And Tablīgh

Which is more important of the two: Purification of the self (Taṣawwuf) or the present Da‘wat wa Tablīgh? Which one should be adopted and which one left out? In order to understand which is to be given preference, it is essential for a person to know their Shar‘ī status. Therefore, before giving the actual answer, the Shar‘ī status will be discussed.

General Tablīgh is Not Obligatory

Hakīmul Ummat Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes:

There is one objection which is levelled against the Maulwīs (and ‘ulamā’): These people sit in their homes, madāris and masājid like bosses; and they have no feeling of mercy over the destruction of the nation. They do not come out of their homes to steer (and guide) the masses. People are getting worse by the day – some

¹ *Āp Betī*, vol. 2, p. 1266.

of them are renouncing Islam while others have no knowledge whatsoever of the injunctions of Islam. Despite this, they [the ‘ulamā’] are not bothered in the least. So much so, even if someone were to inform them [of a situation] they do not respond and are not prepared to have their rest interrupted.

The answer to this is that this objection could have been correct to a certain extent against them if conveying the teachings and injunctions of Islam were still compulsory. In such a situation it would have undoubtedly been necessary for them to go from house to house, travel from city to city – or send someone – to teach the injunctions of Islam to the masses. But now, the teachings and injunctions of Islam are well known in the East and West (and in every corner of the world). There is no one who has at least not heard the fundamentals and subsidiary matters of Islam. As for those who have a bit of education, they even have some knowledge of other religions which they obtained via literature (and today, Islamic beliefs and injunctions have been proliferated to the entire world via the internet). Assuming no person has reached a certain place to convey the teachings, the people of that place (if not all, at least some of them) have travelled to other places where they heard the teachings (and in this way, others came to know of them).

As regards the places about which we have knowledge, there is no place where Islam and its teachings have not reached. The jurists have clearly stated in *Kitāb as-Siyar*, and this point also makes sense to our intellects, that Tabligh is not obligatory where Islam and its teachings have reached; but it is certainly desirable.

Thus, if Tabligh is not wājib, how can there be any criticism for not carrying it out? If the objection is made for leaving out a desirable act, then the first answer is that it is not even objectionable.

The second reply is, notwithstanding this, if these people do not have any necessary occupation, there can be some leeway in making an objection against them. But bearing in mind that they are rendering other services to Islam – and that too, essential services – then how can there be any room to make objections against them!

The second answer in this regard is that just as the ‘ulamā’ are being advised to go to the houses of misguided people, guide them and rectify them; why are the misguided people themselves not advised to go to such and such place where there are ‘ulamā’ (and mashā’ikh) and to have themselves rectified?

The third answer is: Is this service only the responsibility of the ‘ulamā’? Is it not the responsibility of other wealthy Muslims? In other words, they too must understand and realize that the ‘ulamā’ have to work for their livelihoods. They [the wealthy]

must collect considerable amounts of money and appoint a group of 'ulamā' specifically for this work. They must support them financially so that they do not have to worry about their livelihoods. These 'ulamā' will then not have to worry about their livelihoods and be able to carry out this service as the missionaries receive large sums of money, deliver lectures from place to place, and go around distributing booklets.

Our people who levelled this accusation against the 'ulamā' did it after observing the efforts of the missionaries. This has become a general habit – people do not ponder over the reality of the situation but are quick to adopt the ways and customs of other nations, and make their agreement and opposition the criterion for approval and disapproval of a thing. Because they see the missionaries doing this and do not see the 'ulamā' doing as much, they make objections without looking at the reality regarding which I explained. Before accusing our 'ulamā' of not making efforts like their scholars, they did not stop to check if our wealthy people render financial assistance to our 'ulamā' as their wealthy people do. The following idiom applies to them:

حفظت شيئاً وغابت عنك أشياء

You remembered one point but many other points were overlooked by you.

However, if it is established that there is such a place (a jungle or island) where Islam has not reached (as yet), then we certainly cannot deny the obligation of conveying Islam to that place. But this obligation does not rest entirely on the 'ulamā'. It will be obligatory on all Muslims according to their capabilities.¹

The Categorical Statements of The Four Madhāhib

The jurists, mujtahids, Hadīth experts and Qur'ān commentators also stated the same thing.

Hadrat Shaykh al-Hadīth Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib rahīmahullāh states in his celebrated work, *Aujaz al-Masālik Sharḥ Muwattā Mālik*:

أما اليوم فقد انتشرت الدعوة فاستغنى بذلك عن الدعاء، قال أحمد: كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يدعو إلى الإسلام قبل أن يجارب حتى أظهر الله الدين وعلا الإسلام، ولا أعرف اليوم أحدا يدعى، قد بلغت الدعوة كل أحد، فالروم قد بلغتهم الدعوة، وعلموا ما يراد منهم، وإنما كانت الدعوة في أول الإسلام، وإن دعا فلا بأس. قال الموفق: قوله في أهل الكتاب والمجوس لا يدعون فهو على عمومته، لأن الدعوة قد انتشرت وعمت فلم يبق منهم من لم تبلغه الدعوة إلا نادر بعيد، وأما قوله: يدعى عبدة الأوثان فليس بعام، فإن من بلغته الدعوة منهم لا يدعون، وإن وجد منهم من لم تبلغه الدعوة دعي قبل القتال.

Ibn Habīb Mālikī, a student of Imām Mālik rahīmahullāh relates:

¹ *Huqūq al-'Ilm*, pp. 49-52, Thānah Bhawan.

روى ابن حبيب عن المدنيين من أصحاب مالك: إنما الدعوة اليوم في من لم يبلغه الإسلام ولا يعلم ما يقاتل، وأما من بلغه الإسلام وعلم ما يدعى إليه وحارب وحارب كالروم والأفرنججي من داني أرضى الإسلام وعرفه فالدعوة فيهم ساقطة.^١

Imām Nawawī Shāfi'ī writes in his commentary to *Sahīh Muslim*:

وفي هذه المسألة ثلاثة مذاهب حكاهما المازري والقاضي: إحداهما يجب الإنذار مطلقاً، قاله مالك وغيره وهذا ضعيف، والثاني: لا يجب مطلقاً، وهذا أضعف منه أو باطل، الثالث: يجب إن لم تبلغهم الدعوة ولا يجب إن بلغتهم لكن يستحب، وهذا هو الصحيح، وبه قال نافع مولى ابن عمر، والحسن البصري، والثوري، والليث، والشافعي، وأبو ثور، وابن المنذر، والجمهور. قال ابن المنذر: وهو قول أكثر أهل العلم، وقد تظاهرت الأحاديث الصحيحة على معناه، فمنها هذا الحديث، وحديث قتل كعب بن الأشرف، وحديث قتل ابن أبي الحقيق.^٢

Hāfiz Ibn Hajar writes in *Fath al-Bārī*:

وذهب الأكثر إلى أن ذلك كان في بدء الأمر قبل انتشاره دعوة الإسلام، فإن وجد من لم تبلغه الدعوة لم يقاتل حتى يدعى، نص عليه الشافعي.^٣

'Allāmah Ibn Humām Hanafi writes in *Fath al-Qadīr*, his commentary to *Hidāyah*:

وفي المحيط: بلوغ الدعوة حقيقة أو حكماً بأن استفاض شرقاً وغرباً أنهم إلى ماذا يدعون وعلى ماذا يقاتلون فأقيم ظهورها مقامها انتهى. ولا شك أن في بلاد الله

^١ أوجز المسالك شرح الموطأ مالك، كتاب الجهاد، باب النهي عن قتل النساء والولدان في الغزو: ٢٣٠\٨.

^٢ شرح مسلم للنووي، كتاب الجهاد والسير، باب جواز الإغارة على الكفار الذين بلغتهم دعوة الإسلام: ٨١\٢.

^٣ فتح الباري شرح البخاري: كتاب الجهاد، باب دعوة اليهود والنصارى: ١٠٨\٦.

تعالى من لا شعور له بهذا الأمر فيجب أن المدار عليه ظن أن هؤلاء لم تبلغهم الدعوة فإذا كانت بلغتهم لا تجب ولكن يستحب...وقيد هذا الاستحباب بأن لا يتضمن ضررا بأن يعلم بأنهم بالدعوة يستعدون أو يحتالون أو يتحصنون ، وغلبة الظن في ذلك بما يظهر من أحوالهم كالعلم بل هو المراد ، وإذا فحقيقته يتعذر الوقوف عليها^١.

At-Tafsīr al-Munīr states:

إن الدعوة إلى الإسلام ونشرها في افاق العالم والأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر من فروض الإسلام الكفائية^٢.

Ahkām al-Qur'ān of *al-Jassās* states:

قال الله تعالى: ولتكن منكم أمة يدعون إلى الخير ويأمرون بالمعروف وينهون عن المنكر. قال أبو بكر: قد حوت هذه الآية معنيين: أحدهما: وجوب الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر. والآخر: أنه فرض على الكفاية ليس بفرض على كل أحد في نفسه إذا قام به غيره. لقوله تعالى: ولتكن منكم أمة. وحقيقته تقتضي البعض دون البعض، فدل على أنه فرض الكفاية إذا قام به بعضهم سقط عن الباقي. ومن الناس من يقول هو فرض على كل أحد في نفسه... والذي يدل على صحة هذا القول أنه إذا قام به بعضهم سقط عن الباقي ، كالجهاد وغسل الموتي وتكفينهم والصلاة عليهم ودفنهم، ولولا أنه فرض على الكفاية لما سقط عن الآخرين بقيام بعضهم به^٣.

^١فتح القدير شرح الهداية، كتاب السير باب كيفية القتال: ٩٢٤\٥.

^٢التفسير المنير: ٤١٠\٤.

^٣أحكام القرآن للحصان: ٢٩\٢، مطبوعة سهيل أكاديمي، لاهور.

Fatāwā

In the light of explicit texts, our 'ulamā' also state that general da'wat and tablīgh is fard-e-kifāyah. A few fatāwā are quoted here:

Fatāwā Maḥmūdīyyah

Question: Is tablīgh in our times wājib?

Answer: Tablīgh is fard in every era, and fard in our times as well. However, it is fard-e-kifāyah. The level of its importance will depend on the extent of its necessity, and the extent of responsibility will depend on the extent of a person's qualification. Enjoining good and prohibiting evil are explicitly ordered in the Qur'an. The greatest good is īmān and the worst evil is kufr. Each believer is accountable according to his capability to convey the Dīn of Allāh *ta'ālā* in line with the guidance of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*.¹

Fatāwā Haqqānīyyah

It is fard-e-kifāyah to invite Allāh's creation towards His orders and stop it from committing His prohibitions. If some people fulfil this responsibility, it will fall off from the rest. It is incorrect to claim that it is fard-e-'ayn. Nonetheless, it is fard-e-'ayn for a person to keep himself pure from evils.²

¹ *Fatāwā Maḥmūdīyyah*, vol. 4, pp. 203-204, Karachi edition.

² *Fatāwā Haqqānīyyah*, vol. 2, p. 438.

Kifāyatul Muftī

Question: Is this Tablighī movement fard-e-'ayn or fard-e-kifāyah?

Answer: It is not fard-e-'ayn but there is no doubt about it being fard-e-kifāyah.¹

It is learnt from the above quotations that tabligh of Dīn is fard-e-kifāyah. This means that if some people do it, the responsibility falls off from the remaining people; but if no one does it, everyone will be sinning.

Taṣawwuf

After clarifying the Shar'ī status of Tabligh, we now come to taṣawwuf and purification of the self.

Taṣawwuf has several names: 'Ilm al-Qalb, 'Ilm al-Akhlāq, Iḥsān, Sulūk and Ṭarīqat. These are different names for one and the same thing. By and large, the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth use the word iḥsān; while in our times the word taṣawwuf is more well-known. No matter what, the reality of all is the same, viz. just as many of our actions are carried out by our external body parts, many are carried out by our heart. The latter are known as A'māl-e-Bāṭinah – internal actions. Our external actions are considered good, fard, wājib, etc. by the Sharī'at; and others are labelled bad, ḥarām, disliked and so on. Our internal actions can be divided in the same way. Some of them are liked, fard and wājib, e.g. Allāh-consciousness, love for Allāh *ta'ālā*, sincerity, reliance on Allāh *ta'ālā*, patience, gratitude, humility, submission, forbearance, generosity, modesty, mercy, and so on. These internal actions and characteristics which are liked by the Sharī'at are known as faḍā'il and akhlāq-

¹ *Kifāyatul Muftī*, vol. 6, Kitāb al-'Ilm, Nu'mānī Press, Delhi.

e-hamīdah. Then there are internal actions which are disliked and harām, e.g. pride, ostentation, scorn, showing off, love for wealth, love for position, miserliness, cowardice, avarice, enmity, jealousy, malice, hard-heartedness, inopportune or unbridled anger, and so on. These are known as radhā'il or akhlāq-e-radhīlah.

There is a long list of fadā'il and radhā'il. Details in this regard are to be found in the books of taṣawwuf.

Just as certain external actions are farḍ-e-'ayn and some are harām, there are internal actions which are farḍ-e-'ayn and harām. Taṣawwuf involves carrying out the internal farḍ actions and abstaining from the internal harām actions. Imām Ghazzālī rahimahullāh provides a detailed definition of the science of taṣawwuf, but its concise and comprehensive definition has been given by 'Allāmah Ibn 'Ābidīn Shāmī rahimahullāh as follows:

هو علم يعرف به أنواع الفضائل وكيفية اكتسابها، وأنواع الرذائل وكيفية اجتنابها.

It is a science through which the various types of virtues and the ways of acquiring them are learnt, and the various types of evils and the ways of abstaining from them are learnt.

Purity of the heart, cleanliness of the soul and purity of the self have been the lifeblood of every religion and the objectives of prophet-hood. From the three objectives of commissioning Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam as a Prophet as mentioned in the Qur'ān, the second one is:

وَيُرِيهِمْ

He purifies (the character and actions) of Muslims.

Allāh *ta'ālā* placed the success and failure of every human on the purification of the self:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

*He who purified it has indeed achieved his goal. He who leaves it buried in the dust has indeed failed.*¹

The Qur'ān informs us that sins are not committed by the external body parts alone. Rather, there are internal sins as well. It is *fard-e-'ayn* to abstain from both, and every sin is punishable whether it is internal or external. Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

وَدَرُّوا ظَاهِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ ط إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْسِبُونَ الْإِثْمَ سَيُجْزَوْنَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَقْتَرِفُونَ.

*Abstain from open sins and secret sins. Those who commit sins shall soon be punished for what they earned.*²

The verses of Sūrah al-Baqarah, Sūrah Āl 'Imrān and Sūrah al-Jumu'ah contain the same theme in the same words with reference to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ ط إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ.

*O our Sustainer! Send to them a Messenger from among themselves, who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book and wisdom, and purify them. Surely You alone are all-mighty, all-wise.*³

¹ Sūrah ash-Shams, 91: 9-10.

² Sūrah al-An'am, 6: 120.

³ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 129.

Hadrat Mufti Muḥammad Shafi' Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says in his explanation to the above verse:

The objectives behind Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* coming into this world or the duties which his position as a Prophet involved are three: Reciting the verses, teaching the Qur'ān and wisdom, purification of people's character and so on.

After detailing the first two objectives, Hadrat Mufti Sāhib *rahimahullāh* goes into explaining the third objective. He writes:

The third obligation of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* as a Prophet is purification. This means: to purify from external and internal impurities. Muslims in general are aware of the external impurities. Internal impurities refer to unbelief, polytheism, total reliance on others apart from Allāh *ta'ālā*, corrupt beliefs, pride, jealousy, malice, love for the world and so on. Although all these things are academically included in teaching the Qur'ān and Sunnah, by mentioning purification as a separate responsibility, reference is made to the fact that just as a science cannot be acquired by mere understanding of its words, in the same way, superficial and academic acquisition of a science are not enough for proficiency in it. It has to be done under the supervision of a mentor who will ensure that the person practises that science and is habituated to it. In *taṣawwuf*, being under the training of an expert shaykh

means that the injunctions which are taught academically must now be habituated into practice.

The Two Systems of Guidance And Rectification: The Book of Allāh And The Men of Allāh

Two additional points need to be observed in this regard. (1) From the beginning of the universe, Allāh *ta'ālā* laid down two systems for the guidance and rectification of humanity. This was found in every era and continued until Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. One was the system of divinely revealed Books. The other was the system of Messengers who taught the Books. Just as mere sending down of the Books was not considered adequate, in the same way, Allāh *ta'ālā* did not suffice with sending Messengers alone. Rather, both systems were put into place. By putting these two systems in place, the norm of Allāh *ta'ālā* and the Qur'ān's testimony in this regard have opened a large door of knowledge for the rectitude and success of nations. Neither is knowledge of the Book alone enough for man's correct education and training, nor a mentor. Rather, there is a need for heavenly guidelines and divine laws on one side – known as the Book or the Qur'ān – and a need for a teacher and a mentor. The duty of such a person is to enlighten the masses of heavenly guidelines through education and training, and make them accustomed to it. The primary teacher of man can only be a human, a book cannot be his teacher

or mentor. Yes, it can certainly assist him in his education and training.¹

Those who claim that there is no need for a shaykh for purification and training, and that the present forms of Tablighī activities are sufficient for his rectification are clearly refuted in the above explanation.

It must have been understood from the above details that the work of taṣawwuf and tazkiyah is also the work of Prophets. Rejecting it entails rejection of clear texts of the Qur’ān. The other point which is learnt is that just as it is fard-e-‘ayn for every male and female to know juristical rules and regulations based on their individual conditions and occupations; in the same way it is fard-e-‘ayn on each male and female to acquire those praiseworthy characteristics which are not found in them, and to protect themselves against the evil traits which are concealed within their selves – all of which are dependent on knowledge of the science of taṣawwuf. As for developing insight and expertise in the entire science of taṣawwuf to the extent of being able to train others, this is fard-e-kifāyah.

Hadrat Muftī Muḥammad Shafi’ Sāhib rahimahullāh writes under the heading “The science of taṣawwuf is included in fard-e-‘ayn”:

Everyone knows that it is fard-e-‘ayn to know the external injunctions such as ṣalāh and fasting; and that it is also fard-e-‘ayn to acquire knowledge of them. In his explanation to the following verse, Hadrat Qādī Thanā’ullāh Pānīpatī rahimahullāh writes in *Tafsīr-e-Mazharī*:

¹ *Ma’ārif al-Qur’ān*, vol. 1, pp. 335-336.

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَآفَّةً

*It is not [proper] for the Muslims to go forth all together.*¹

Knowledge of internal good actions and internal prohibitions is known as the science of taṣawwuf. Since these internal actions are farḍ-e-ʿayn on every person, knowledge of them is also farḍ-e-ʿayn. Nowadays, what is referred to as the science of taṣawwuf has become a conglomeration of many sciences, expositions and personal inspirations. At this point, farḍ-e-ʿayn refers to only that portion which details the farḍ and wājib internal actions. For example, correct beliefs which are connected to the internal self, patience, gratitude, reliance, contentment and so on. These are farḍ in a specific sense. Or, for example, conceit, pride, jealousy, malice, stinginess, worldly greed and so on – which, in the light of the Qurʾān and Sunnah are ḥarām. To learn the reality of these things, how to acquire them [the good qualities] and how to abstain from the bad qualities – all this is also farḍ on every Muslim male and female. The fundamental foundation of the science of taṣawwuf is solely this which is farḍ-e-ʿayn.²

Reference was made to *Tafsīr-e-Mazharī* in the above quotation. The original text is quoted here:

¹ Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 122.

² *Maʿārif al-Qurʾān*, vol. 4, pp. 489-490.

وأما العلم اللدني الذي يسمون أهلها بالصوفية الكرام فهو فرض عين، لأن ثمراتها تصفية القلب عن اشتغال بغير الله تعالى واتصافه بدوام الحضور، وتركية النفس عن رذائل الأخلاق من العجب والكبر والحسد وحب الدنيا والكسل في الطاعات وإيثار الشهوات والرياء والسمعة وغير ذلك، وتجليتها بكرام الأخلاق من التوبة والرضا بالقضاء والشكر على النعماء والصبر على البلاء وغير ذلك، ولا شك أن هذه الأمور محرمات وفرائض على كل بشر أشد تحريماً من معاصي الجوارح وأهم افتراضاً من فرائضها.^١

The famous book of jurisprudence, *Shāmī*, states:

أن علم الاخلاص والعجب والحسد والرياء فرض عين، ومثلها غيرها من آفات النفوس: كالكبر والشح والحقد والغش والغضب والعداوة والبغضاء والطمع والبخل والبطر والخيلاء والخيانة والمداهنة والاستكبار عن الحق والمكر والمخادعة والقسوة وطول الامل ونحوها مما هو مبين في ربع المهلكات من الاحياء.

قال فيه: ولا ينفك عنها بشر، فيلزمه أن يتعلم منها ما يرى نفسه محتاجا إليه، وإزالتها فرض عين، ولا يمكن إلا بمعرفة حدودها وأسبابها وعلاماتها وعلاجها فإن من لا يعرف الشر يقع فيه.^٢

The following is contained in the marginal notes of *Fatāwā 'Ulamā'-e-Deoband*:

Fard is of two types: fard-e-'ayn and fard-e-kifāyah. Fard-e-'ayn refers to a compulsory duty which has to be carried out by every Muslim male and female. If a few Muslims carry it out, the others will

^١التفسير المظهرى، التوبة، ٤٣٢\٤.

^٢مقدمة رد المختار: ١٢٧\١، مطبوعة: كركيا، ديوبند.

not be absolved of it. For example, ṣalāh, fasting, ḥajj, zakāh and so on. Fard-e-kifāyah refers to a compulsory duty which is carried out by a few Muslims – to the extent of necessity – and the responsibility then falls off the remaining Muslims. For example, arrangements for the enshrouding and burial of a Muslim, the janāzah ṣalāh, jihād and so on. It is also fard-e-kifāyah to develop insight and expertise in the entire science of jurisprudence and science of taṣawwuf. If a town has just one such person who can guide its residents as regards the Sharī rulings for the issues which they face and can carry out the work of purification of their character to the extent of necessity, then this responsibility falls off the remaining population. But if there is not even one such person in a town, it becomes fard on its residents to train an ‘ālim to fulfil this responsibility or to bring one from somewhere else. If not, all the residents of this town will be sinful.¹

The same point is made in *Tafsīr-e-Mazharī*:

والفرض الكفائية، وهو أن يتعلم الرجل كل باب من العلم حتى يبلغ درجة الفتوى، فإذا قعد أهل بلد عن تعلمه عصوا جميعاً، وإذا قام من كل بلد واحد بتعلمه سقط

¹ *Ma’ārif al-Qur’ān*, vol. 4, pp. 487-490 as quoted from the introduction of *Fatāwā ‘Ulamā’-e-Deoband*, vol. 1, p. 81.

عن الباقيين، وعليهم تقليده فيما يقع لهم من الحوادث، هو أفضل من كل عبادة نافلة^١.

It is learnt from the above quotations that for the realization of that portion of *taṣawwuf* whose acquisition is *farḍ-e-kifāyah*, it is essential for a town to have an expert *shaykh* (*khānqāh*). If no such arrangement is found in the town, it becomes *farḍ* on the town-people to prepare such a *shaykh* or make arrangements to get someone from outside. If not, all the townsfolk will be sinful.

Now that the *Shar'ī* status of present-day *Tablīgh* and the acquisition of *taṣawwuf* has been made clear, it becomes easy to conclude that the work of *Tablīgh* is *mustahab* while *tazkiyah* is *farḍ-e-'ayn*. *Mustahab* means that if you do it, you will be rewarded; if you do not, you will not be sinning. On the other hand, the one who leaves out a *farḍ* is sinful, worthy of blame, and eligible for punishment in the Hereafter.

Most of The Current Ways And Teachings of The Sufis Are Organizational Procedures – They Are Not Injunctions

In the question, mention was made of the different types of treatment for the rectification of the self, and the various *taṣawwuf* terms such as immersing one's self in one's *shaykh*, focus, the pouring of mercy on the heart, eating less, sleeping less, reducing interactions with people, exposition, meditation, collective *dhikr* and so on. In order to understand the reality of these terms, the valuable principles laid down by *Hadrat Thānwī raḥimahullāh* as quoted by *Hadrat Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' Sāhib raḥimahullāh*

^١التفسير المظهرى، التوبة، ٤/٣٢٣.

are quoted here so that objections in this regard may be removed.

For the rectification of the self the Sufis prescribe certain special treatments, and spiritual exercises and strivings which are not established from the Qur'ān, Sunnah and practices of the Ṣaḥābah and Tābi'ūn. Some people are confused into thinking that these are included in bid'ah and consider this path to be wrong because of it and have bad thoughts about the Sufis based on this. Undoubtedly, there are many pseudo-Sufis who exceeded the limits prescribed by the elders and got caught up in polytheism and bid'ah. The imams of taṣawwuf and seniors of the past are absolved in this regard. Hakīmul Ummat Ḥadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* clarifies this reality in one of his statements:

The treatments which the Sufis prescribe for the seekers are not injunctions for which there is a need to search for proofs from the texts of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. Rather, this practice is a system and treatment for rectification. This is why it is different for each person based on his individual temperament and condition. For example, pride is ḥarām and its removal is fard. This is an injunction which is laid down in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. However, the mashā'ikh resort to different types of treatment for its removal in a manner which will be most suited to the person. They will say to one person: "You must go and straighten the shoes of the worshippers [in the masjid]." Another person will be told: "You must go and announce that you are a useless person."

These are solely treatments, and there is no need for a text from the Qur'ān and Hadīth as proof. Even if a text of the Sharī'at is furnished, it is done voluntarily. In short, for injunctions of the Sharī'at, it is essential for proof from principal sources of the Sharī'at and practices of the past peoples. If something is not established from the Qur'ān, Sunnah, and practices of the Sahābah *raḍiyallāhu 'anhum* and Tābi'ūn; adopting it in injunctions will be called a bid'ah. However, the procedures which are adopted for the removal of natural obstacles and impediments which prevent a person from carrying out injunctions of the Sharī'at – these are known as treatments. It is not necessary for these procedures to be proven from the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

This is similar to bodily treatment. A ḥakīm or doctor prescribes a certain medication to a patient, asks him to abstain from certain foods, or to consume certain foods, etc. What if someone were to ask the doctor: “From which Qur'ānic verse or Hadīth is it proven that this particular medicine must be taken?” This is obviously a futile question which is based on ignorance. Yes, it is essential for the medication to be proven to be ḥalāl from the Qur'ān and Sunnah. After that, whatever restrictions, conditions and so on which the doctor lays down – these do not have to be proven from the Qur'ān and Hadīth. These are based on experience.

Yes, one point needs to be remembered. If a person considers the procedure, restriction and condition which were prescribed by the doctor to be an act of worship, it will certainly become a bid'ah.

The necessity of treating the self is established from the Qur'ān, Sunnah and practice of the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum. It is an act of worship and elicits reward. However, to consider a certain form to be an act of worship and the basis for reward – in the sense that the one who does not do it like that is considered bad – will result in including it within the limits of bid'ah. Understand this well.¹

Note: Whatever was written previously about the Shar'ī status of present day Tablīgh is most certainly not meant to mean that the work of Tablīgh should be abandoned. Two aspects are to be considered here: (1) The Shar'ī status. (2) The Shar'ī intent. The intent of the Sharī'at is that every possible effort must be made to spread and propagate Dīn while remaining within the boundaries of the Sharī'at. This type of Tablīgh is a Sunnah which has been inherited from all the Prophets *'alayhimus salām*. It is the blessed Sunnah of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. It was to this end that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum left their beloved city and bore the hardships and difficulties at Tā'if. The history books are filled with these incidents.

¹ *Majālis Hakīmul Ummat*, pp. 192-194.

Belief in Tauḥīd And The Meaning of Tauḥīd in Purpose

Question: It is the unanimous decision of Da‘wat wa Tablīgh – in fact of the Qur’ān and Aḥādīth – that whatever happened in the past, whatever is happening at present and whatever is to happen in the future are solely and exclusively through Allāh’s power. He alone is its master and absolute controller. He has no partner in this regard. What, then, is the reason for the people of taṣawwuf to always claim: “Whatever I received and whatever blessings I am experiencing are by virtue of the company of my shaykh and mentor. Whatever blessings I receive in the future can only be received through the company of my shaykh.” Does such a claim not tarnish the creed of tauḥīd?

Answer: You have confused belief in tauḥīd and tauḥīd in purpose (tauḥīd-e-maṭlab). Belief in tauḥīd means: To believe Allāh *ta‘ālā* to be one and perfect in His Being and attributes.¹

Tauḥīd-e-maṭlab is a terminology of taṣawwuf. Imām Rabbānī Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* defines it as follows:

Tauḥīd-e-maṭlab means to have the following conviction with regard to one’s shaykh: “None apart from him can convey me to my destination [Allāh *ta‘ālā*]. Although there are other mashā’ikh in the present age and they also possess the same qualities, reaching my destination will only be through my shaykh.” Thus, tauḥīd-e-maṭlab is a major pillar of sulūk. The one who does not have it will remain

¹ *Imdād al-Aḥkām*, vol. 1, p. 134.

confused and wander aimlessly. It will not be far-fetched for him to be destroyed while wandering in some jungle. Allāh *ta'ālā* too will not be bothered about him in the least. For a person to think about every shaykh of his time: “He too can quench my thirst and convey me to my destination” is harmful in sulūk. In fact, just as the truth is one and the qiblah is one, in the same way, consider only person to be the guiding shaykh. If not, you will acquire nothing but destruction. Many people were destroyed in this aimless wandering. Even if a person has a whispering that there is someone other than his shaykh who can convey him to his destination, Shayṭān will certainly gain control over him and cause him to slip.¹

A statement of Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* is quoted in *Tadhkiratur Rashīd*.

Maulānā Wilāyat Husayn Sāhib relates: “I asked on one occasion: ‘It is popularly believed that Shayṭān cannot adopt the appearance of a shaykh. Is this correct?’ Hadrat replied: ‘Yes, but only if a murīd has acquired unity in purpose. And this means that the murīd’s conviction in his shaykh has become so firmly entrenched that he does not consider anyone else in this world as his means of guidance.’ Or he said something similar. He also said: ‘The meaning of tauhīd-e-maṭlab is

¹ *Imdād as-Sulūk*, pp. 64-65.

explained very well in *Risālah Makkīyah*.¹

Also refer to the topic, *Waḥdat-e-Maṭlab Kī Ta'kīd* in *Anfās-e-'Īsā*, vol. 2, p. 411.

An excellent example of unity in purpose

Faqīhul Ummat Hadrat Muftī Maḥmūd Hasan Gangohī *rahimahullāh* explains tauḥīd-e-maṭlab through an excellent example.

There is a one and half year old child and there are several women sitting in an assembly. Included among these women is his mother, his sister, his paternal aunt and his maternal aunt. He goes into the lap of one of them, then to another's and sometimes to another's. However, when he feels hungry and wants to drink milk, he goes to his mother to drink from her breast; he does not go to anyone else. He satiates his hunger and thirst from her.

Take the example of a sick person. He knows that there are such and such doctors in the city, all of them are capable and experts. However, he has confidence in one so he goes for his treatment to him alone even though he knows that there are other doctors who are more capable and better. He respects the other doctors; does not disrespect any of them.

The same can be said of love and association – it has to be with all saints. However, a person's rectification and

¹ *Tadhkiratur Rashīd*, vol. 2, p. 248.

training will only be done through his shaykh whose hand he has held on to. If he acts on the contrary, he will be at a loss and will not acquire his objective. There was a person who established a bond of rectification and training by a certain shaykh, but commenced his spiritual practices under the instruction of someone else. There was no limit to this person's confusion and restlessness. He went to Jalālābād to Hadrat Maulānā Masīhūllāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* who expressed his displeasure at the person and said: "Your situation is extremely difficult. When you had already established a bond with a particular shaykh, why did you go to someone else?"¹

From the above investigation on the creed of tauhīd and tauhīd in purpose, we learn that when a murīd says: "Whatever I received is really through the blessings of my shaykh", then this is actually the fruit of tauhīd in purpose. It is in no way contradictory to the creed of tauhīd because the murīd is not saying this after believing Allāh *ta'ālā* has a partner in His being or attributes.

After explaining the proofs for the reality of tauhīd, Imām Rabbānī Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* says:

There are countless rational and traditional proofs for tauhīd. However, there are four which are most obvious: (1) to create, (2) to nourish and sustain, (3) to cause death, (4) to bring to life. No one

¹ *Malfūzāt Faqīhul Ummat*, vol. 10, pp. 53-54.

apart from Allāh *ta'ālā* can do any of these four. Allāh *ta'ālā* says in this regard:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ

Allāh is the one who created you, then provided you with sustenance. He will then cause you to die and bring you back to life.

Oneness of Allāh *ta'ālā* is the most special of all Allāh's attributes. This is why all the 'ulamā', Sufis, and Imāms of all the madhāhib are unanimous in this regard. They do not consider it permissible for any similarity or cancellation in their belief in tauhīd. In reality, true tauhīd entails believing in Allāh *ta'ālā* to be so unique that in the state of tauhīd the person does not see any second being, even in his own self.

According to the Sufis, tauhīd means to cast aside even tauhīd while in a state of tauhīd. This is because to turn ones attention to anything or anyone other than Allāh *ta'ālā* – even towards tauhīd (which is something other than Allāh) – is included in similarity with Allāh *ta'ālā*. Allāh *ta'ālā* knows best.¹

To sum up, there is a big difference between tauhīd and the means to tauhīd. The shaykh is the means through which a murīd acquires tauhīd. When a murīd says: "I received everything from my shaykh", he is expressing the means to tauhīd. The actions of

¹ *Imdād as-Sulūk*, pp. 167-168.

the Ahlullāh are explanations and expressions of tauhīd.

In line with the discussion on tauhīd, we quote a statement of 'Ārif Billāh Ḥadrat Maulānā Waṣīyyullāh Ṣāhib Allāhābādī *rahimahullāh*. He said:

Ḥadrat Ḥājī Ṣāhib *quddisa sirruhu* had first pledged bay'at to a certain person and was his khalīfah. Later on he pledged bay'at to Ḥadrat Miyā Jī Nūr Muḥammad *rahimahullāh*. He says with reference to his shaykh:

O Nūr Muḥammad! You are the beloved of Allāh. You are the deputy of Ḥadrat Muḥammad Mustafā *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* in India.

Glory to Allāh! Look at how cautious these personalities were with regard to tauhīd. What can be said about those who were the means for them! These personalities fulfilled their rights as well. The condition today is that people neither understand tauhīd nor the means to tauhīd. How, then, will they fulfil their rights? The Auliya' solely taught tauhīd to those who frequented them. Each action of theirs is immersed in tauhīd to the extent that it used to even influence kings. A person went to a Sufi and requested him to intercede on his behalf before the king. The Sufi wrote a letter of intercession. He wrote in it:

إن أعطيته فالمعطي هو الله وأنت المشكور، وإن منعتة فالمانع هو
الله وأنت المعذور.

The bearer of this letter is coming to you. If you fulfil his need, the real fulfiller is Allāh ta'ālā and we will be grateful to you as well. If you do not fulfil his need, we will understand that the real decliner is Allāh ta'ālā – He did not will it – so we will consider you to be excused.

The king was astonished when he read this letter. How much he gave to the person is not known.¹

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* related that Hadrat Maulānā Gangohī *rahimahullāh* used to say: “If Hadrat Junayd [Baghdādī] *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Hājī [Imdādullāh] Sāhib *rahimahullāh* were present in the same assembly, I will not even lift my gaze to look at Hadrat Junayd.”²

Practising on The Teachings of One’s Shaykh

Question: The Sufīs are of the view that doing good deeds and abstaining from evils must be confined to the shaykh and mentor. As far as possible, the murīd must not deviate from the sequence and spiritual practices prescribed by the shaykh. The murīd must periodically inform his shaykh, and whatever guidelines the shaykh gives him must be adhered to strictly. Can a shaykh really enjoy such a high status? Does this not entail considering the shaykh to be an absolute proof? Is it not construed from this that the shaykh is ma’sūm like a Prophet? Is it possible for the entire or partial guideline of the shaykh to be destructive and not beneficial? Can such complete

¹ *Ta’līfāt Musliḥul Ummat*, vol. 1, pp. 319-320.

² *Ifādāt*, vol. 1, p. 172.

obedience to a Walī (who is not ma'sūm) be permissible?

Answer: Submission, obedience and informing the shaykh are fundamentals in the path of sulūk. An explanation of this is as follows: A murīd must hand himself over to a shaykh-e-kāmil, he must obliterate his own opinions before the opinions of his shaykh, and he must inform his shaykh of his conditions periodically.

The following is stated in *Imdād as-Sulūk* under the heading, The essential practices to be followed by sālikīn:

After a murīd has woken up from his negligence, it is essential for him to hand himself over to a shaykh who is a man of cognition, trustworthy, well-known for his concern for others and his integrity, and is conversant with the fine points of the Tarīqat. The murīd must not disobey him in any matter so that the shaykh can teach him about turning to Allāh *ta'ālā*, the injunctions of the Sharī'at and sulūk. This is because a true shaykh is one who firmly establishes and embeds Dīn and the Sharī'at in the hearts of his murīds.¹

At another place he writes under the heading, The need for total confidence and submission to the shaykh:

It must be known that once the seed to tread towards Allāh *ta'ālā* is planted in a murīd's heart, he must be very particular

¹ *Imdād as-Sulūk*, pp. 111-112.

about safeguarding it because it is an unseen guest (who will be angered by the slightest inattention and depart, never to return). He must therefore consider this guest to be a great boon and present appropriate foods to it so that it digests them happily. In reality, these foods cannot be obtained from anyone apart from a shaykh. This seed which is planted in the murīd's heart is like an infant who is born in the unseen world and comes into this world. He has no food apart from the milk which flows from his mother's breast. He accepts no other milk – not even milk which is available at shops. In the same way, the light of treading the path to Allāh *ta'ālā* which – by the inspiration of Allāh *ta'ālā* – has developed from the unseen in the murīd's heart, can be nothing but that water of cognition which Allāh *ta'ālā* conveys into the hearts of the people of the unseen. There can be nothing else. The people of the unseen are those mashā'ikh who have been honoured with emulating Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, who receive spiritual blessings from Allāh *ta'ālā*, and have become Ahlullāh.

'Awāriḥ quotes a Ḥadīth of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* which states: "Allāh *ta'ālā* cast in the heart of Abū Bakr whatever He cast in my heart." Thus, the one who has acquired the necessary will must not rely on his own opinion and intelligence. Instead, he must search for an expert shaykh – whether in the East or

the West - who possesses the previously mentioned qualities. This is because there is no other alternative. He must then hand himself over to the shaykh and resign from making his own decisions. He must be constantly wary of the whisperings of Shaytān and his self – they will put doubts into his mind about whether this shaykh is sufficiently qualified or not. Once he finds a shaykh with the previously mentioned qualities, he must not allow any place to these whisperings in his heart. He must take the courage and repulse them with full force, and remember this Hadīth: “Hear and obey even if an Abyssinian slave is appointed as a ruler over you.”

No matter what, do not leave yourself to your own decisions. Rather, become subservient to your shaykh because when it comes to becoming a perfect murīd and abstaining from opposing the shaykh, the Sufis have went to the extreme of saying: It is far better for a murīd to be directed by a cat than acting on his own decisions.¹

It is most astonishing! You mixed disjointed presumptions to obedience to a shaykh-e-kāmil and came to incorrect conclusions by saying that it smacks of considering the shaykh to be an absolute proof, that he is ma’sūm like a Prophet and so on.

When it comes to bodily ailments, a patient envisages his success in obeying the views of doctors and

¹ *Imdād as-Sulūk*, pp. 143-144.

physicians. He carries out whatever the doctor emphasizes on him to do. He abstains from certain harmful foods even though the doctor is not obedient to the Sharī'at. In this case, no one concludes that it smacks of considering the doctor to be an absolute proof. Levelling objections of this nature against spiritual physicians (the mashā'ikh of sulūk) is thus baseless.

The following is stated in *Anfās-e-'Īsā*:

A murīd does not have the right to oppose the view of his shaykh even though it may be permissible. The reason for this is that the relationship between a murīd and shaykh is not like that of a student and teacher. Rather, in this path, the murīd/shaykh relationship is like a patient/doctor relationship. It is not permissible for a patient to act against his doctor's "fatwā". This is as long as the instruction of the shaykh does not contravene the Sharī'at.¹

Moreover, it is essential for the shaykh to be a strict adherent of the Sharī'at. Thus, whatever he says will be in the light of the Sharī'at. He will never teach and instruct anything that is against the Sharī'at. Thus, obedience to such a shaykh really entails obedience to the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. In short, the objection which you are making stems from a confusion as regards the means and the objectives. You accorded the rank of objectives to the means and came to incorrect conclusions through disjointed preludes. Understand this well and ponder over it.

¹ *Anfās-e-'Īsā*, vol. 1, p. 29.

Fanā Fī ash-Shaykh is Not Extremism in Dīn

Question: Fanā fī ash-shaykh refers to a murīd obliterating himself completely and considering his shaykh to be everything. He has to obliterate himself before his shaykh. Is this not clear extremism in Dīn? Is this not unlawful based on the verse:

لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ

*Do not exceed the bounds in the matter of your religion.*¹

Answer: You have misconstrued the concept of fanā fī ash-shaykh as extremism in Dīn, and to make matters worse, presented the above verse as proof. From your 14 questions, if you understand the answer to this third question and accept it, then there is hope that the extremism which is so prominent in your questionnaire will be put to an end.

Your position is that of a mustaftī – a person who is asking for a ruling. You should have rather posed the question as follows: “Is fanā fī ash-shaykh extremism?” Instead, you made the mistake of first stating that it is extremism and then providing a proof for it. How astonishing! If this approach of yours is not extremism than what else is it? Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Ḥadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā Ṣāhib *rahimahullāh* was absolutely correct when he said about such people:

I am most astonished at those people who can neither read nor write, who call themselves Muḥammad Fādil, who probably read one or two newspapers or

¹ Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 171.

wrote a useless article in the newspaper (or spent some time in the Tablighī Jamā'at) and then start levelling criticisms against those who are oceans of knowledge. You must always remember this: In order to criticize a person and refute him, it is essential to know the reality of his statement and the strength of his proofs. It is extremely foolish to level criticisms without fully understanding what was said. Our similitude is like a monkey who picked up a piece of ginger from somewhere and now considers himself to be a spice merchant.¹

The reality of extremism

After the above prelude, understand the following:

Ghulūw – extremism means to go beyond the limits.²

The chief linguist, Imām Ibn al-Athīr *rahimahullāh* writes: Ghulūw means to go beyond the limits, to choose the path of severity, to boil over.³

Extremism in Dīn refers to: Taking a Dīnī matter out of or beyond its prescribed limit.

Shayṭān is man's enemy. Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا

*Surely Shayṭān is your enemy, so you also consider him to be an enemy.*⁴

¹ *Al-I'tidāl fī Marātib ar-Rijāl/ Islāmī Siyāsah*, p. 22.

² *Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān*.

³ Ibn al-Athīr: *an-Nihāyah*.

⁴ Sūrah al-Fāṭir, 35: 6.

Shaytān's first effort is to ensure that man does not choose any path of righteousness. He must remain living a life of iniquity and immorality, and in so doing, destroy his material and spiritual life. In order to realize this, Shaytān resorts to whatever stratagems are available to him. In this way, he wants Muslims to move away from Allāh's path. However, if a Muslim resorts to his courage coupled with Allāh's grace, affection and inspiration, comes out of the clutches of sin and treads the path to Paradise, then Shaytān becomes extremely distressed. After all, his prey is slipping away from his hands. A Muslim remains patient, steadfast, firm and courageous – and despite of Shaytān's efforts, he is not prepared to tread the path of sin. Subsequently, Shaytān resorts to his next stratagem, viz. he causes the person to become an extremist as regards the good towards which he is moving. In other words, he takes the good deeds out of the boundaries of the Shari'at to the extent that the good becomes a cause of calamity for the person and his associates. The person falls into extremism and succumbs to various types of sins. Thus, when examined closely, extremism is more detrimental and more complex than other sins. The reason is that a Muslim considers normal sins to be sins, and acknowledges that he is sinning. On the other hand, the person who is an extremist in Dīnī matters does not even realize his sins in most cases. He assumes he is progressing in goodness whereas by transgressing the bounds of the Shari'at, he is falling into not only sin, but various sins. This is why the Qur'ān and Sunnat strictly forbid us from extremism.

Extremism in Dīnī actions

Bearing in mind this destructiveness of extremism, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* disapproved of transgressing the limits in all actions which he

ordered us to do and actions whose virtues he explained. He laid down very important guidelines to safeguard people of this ummat from extremism in the various departments of Dīn.

Extremism in the fundamental pillars of Islam – ṣalāh, fasting, zakāh and ḥajj – is not permitted. How, then, can extremism be permitted in other good deeds and other departments of Dīn?!

Wudū' is a most meritorious act. Despite this, extremism in wudū' is labelled zulm. A Hadīth states:

فمن زاد على هذا فقد أساء وتعدى وظلم.

Whoever does more than this (i.e. washes more than three times), has committed a wrong, transgressed, and wronged himself.

To become so engrossed in optional ṣalāh to the extent that it affects one's health or the person fails in fulfilling the rights of fellow humans is extremism. The books of Hadīth contain many incidents where Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam ordered moderation in even an important worship like ṣalāh because of rights to fellow humans or to one's own self were being trampled.

The Aḥādīth encourage towards optional fasts. There are countless virtues for them, but there is a limit to them as well. Continuous fasting, known as ṣaum ad-dahr, or fasting continuously without breaking the fast, known as ṣaum-e-wisāl, are prohibited by the Shari'at for people in general. Similarly, keeping so many fasts that a person's health is affected or the rights of his guests are not fulfilled is included in

extremism. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam advised a Sahābī, Hadrat ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ās radiyallāhu ‘anhu, saying: “Do not fast more than that.”¹

After salāh, zakāh is the most important pillar of Islam. It is fard-e-‘ayn on every person who owns niṣāb to pay a certain percentage once a year. In addition to zakāh, Allāh ta‘ālā in the Qur‘ān and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam in countless Aḥādīth explain the virtues of spending in the cause of Allāh ta‘ālā. Despite all these virtues and so many encouragements, whenever the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum sought permission to spend their entire wealth in Allāh’s cause, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam did not permit them. Instead, he advised them not to spend all, but to keep aside something for themselves.

A Sahābī presented all his wealth which was in the form of a heap of gold to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam and asked him to spend it in Allāh’s cause. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam expressed severe disapproval.²

There are many virtues of performing hajj. We are ordered to make necessary preparations for this blessed journey and to set aside the provisions which are needed for it. It is extremism to impose such restrictions on one’s self which would increase the hardships of hajj. The prohibition in this regard is to be found in authentic Aḥādīth. This is not the place for details.

¹ For further details refer to *Mishkāt*, p. 179.

² Refer to *Abū Dāwūd* (with *Badhl al-Majhūd*), *Kitāb az-Zakāh*, Bāb ar-Rajul Yakhruju Min Mālihi, vol. 3, pp. 57-58.

Any Muslim whom Allāh *ta'ālā* blessed with a little intelligence and the true desire to follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* can easily understand from the above discussion that extremism in most important acts of worship like *ṣalāh*, fasting, *zakāh* and *ḥajj* is not permissible. How, then, can extremism be permissible in other Dīnī works such as *Tablīgh*, etc. by becoming so immersed in it that one rejects – either in word or in action – other established and proved departments of Dīn or criticizes and castigates those who are attached to those departments!!?

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Muḥaddith Dehlawī *quddisa sirruhu* says:

Bid'ah is considered a serious crime in Dīn because it is the way to distortion in Dīn. This is what happened to previous nations: They made additions to their Book or to the teachings of their Prophet. Every succeeding generation made further additions to the extent that the original Dīn could not be differentiated from the additions which people made.

Hadrat Muftī Muḥammad Shafi' Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes in *Ma'ārif al-Qur'ān*:

One of the major causes of distortion of Dīn is extremism in Dīn.

Hadrat Muftī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes a few lines further down:

Unfortunately, despite Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* paying so much attention to it and the Sharī'at imposing so many restrictions, the Muslim ummah of today has badly succumbed to

this extremism. The effects of it are clearly seen in all departments of Dīn.¹

Those of our Dīnī brothers who are dedicating their lives in important works of Dīn, e.g. Tabligh, jihād, debating, education, politics, etc. must bear this point in mind at every step of the way that they do not unwittingly succumb to extremism. This is because extremism can wipe out their Dīnī services. We must always remember this Hadīth:

إياكم والغلو في الدين، فإنما أهلك من كان قبلكم الغلو في الدين.

*Beware of extremism in Dīn because the thing which destroyed nations before you was extremism in Dīn.*²

A story: From extremism to moderation

Based on the Qur'ānic instruction that we have to advise each other on the truth and the Hadīth which states that Dīn is advice, we quote an incident which occurred in the lives of the Sahābah *raḍiyallāhu 'anhum*. When they used to see any of their fellow brethren on extremism, they would direct him towards moderation. Those who are serving Dīn in its various departments ought to follow in their footsteps. This incident is quoted in Sahīh Bukhārī and concerns two senior Sahābah, Hadīrat Salmān Fārsī *raḍiyallāhu 'anhu* who emigrated to Madīnah, and Hadīrat Abū ad-Dardā' *raḍiyallāhu 'anhu* who was living in Madīnah. The latter's original name was 'Āmir or 'Uwaymir. After emigrating to Madīnah, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam established a brotherhood between these two. The narration reads as follows:

¹ *Ma'ārif al-Qur'ān*, vol. 2, p. 622.

² *Nasa'ī; Mustadrak of Hākim.*

آخَى النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَيْنَ سَلْمَانَ وَأَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ، فَرَارَ سَلْمَانُ أَبَا الدَّرْدَاءِ، فَرَأَى أُمَّ الدَّرْدَاءِ مُتَبَدِّلَةً. فَقَالَ لَهَا مَا شَأْنُكِ، قَالَتْ أَخُوكَ أَبُو الدَّرْدَاءِ لَيْسَ لَهُ حَاجَةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا. فَجَاءَ أَبُو الدَّرْدَاءِ، فَصَنَعَ لَهُ طَعَامًا. فَقَالَ كُلْ. قَالَ فَإِنِّي صَائِمٌ. قَالَ مَا أَنَا بِأَكِلٍ حَتَّى تَأْكُلَ. قَالَ فَأَكَلَ. فَلَمَّا كَانَ اللَّيْلُ ذَهَبَ أَبُو الدَّرْدَاءِ يَقُومُ. قَالَ نَمْ. فَنَامَ، ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ يَقُومُ. فَقَالَ نَمْ. فَلَمَّا كَانَ مِنْ آخِرِ اللَّيْلِ قَالَ سَلْمَانُ فِيمَ الْآنَ. فَصَلَّيَا، فَقَالَ لَهُ سَلْمَانُ إِنَّ لِرَبِّكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا، وَلِنَفْسِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا، وَلِأَهْلِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا، فَأَعْطِ كُلَّ ذِي حَقٍّ حَقَّهُ. فَأَتَى النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَذَكَرَ ذَلِكَ لَهُ، فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: صَدَقَ سَلْمَانُ.

Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa ṣallam established a brotherly relationship between Salmān radiyallāhu ‘anhu and Abū ad-Dardā’ radiyallāhu ‘anhu. [One day], Salmān radiyallāhu ‘anhu went to visit Abū ad-Dardā’ radiyallāhu ‘anhu and saw Umm ad-Dardā’ radiyallāhu ‘anhā in shabby clothes. He asked her: ‘What is this?’ She replied: ‘Your brother, Abū ad-Dardā’, has no inclination to this world.’ Abū ad-Dardā’ radiyallāhu ‘anhu then arrived, prepared food for Salmān radiyallāhu ‘anhu and said to him: ‘You may eat, but I am fasting.’ Salmān radiyallāhu ‘anhu said: ‘I am not going to eat unless you join me.’ So he also ate with him. When night came, Abū ad-Dardā’ radiyallāhu ‘anhu went to stand up [for ṣalāh]. Salmān radiyallāhu ‘anhu said to him: ‘Go to sleep.’ So he went and slept. [After some time], he got up [to offer ṣalāh]. Salmān radiyallāhu ‘anhu said to him: ‘Go to sleep.’ When it was the last portion of the night, Salmān radiyallāhu ‘anhu said to him: ‘You may get up now.’ They both offered ṣalāh together. Salmān radiyallāhu ‘anhu said to him: ‘Your Sustainer has a right over you, your self has a right over you, and your family has a right over you. You should therefore give everyone his due right.’

He then went to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam and related all that transpired to him. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam said: ‘Salmān is correct.’”¹

It is gauged from other narrations that when Abū ad-Dardā’ radiyallāhu ‘anhu went to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam (in order to find out which course of action is better), Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam said to him: “O ‘Uwaymir! Salmān has a better understanding of Dīn than you.” According to another narration, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam affirmed the actions of Salmān radiyallāhu ‘anhu by saying: “Salmān has been given a lot of knowledge.”²

Another point learnt from this incident between Ḥadhrat Abū ad-Dardā’ radiyallāhu ‘anhu and Ḥadhrat Salmān radiyallāhu ‘anhu is that if those who have mutual Dīnī love – whether fellow colleagues in teaching, education, tablīgh, khānqāh – see their fellow brother transgressing the limits of the Sharī‘at, they must steer him towards moderation with love, softness and wisdom so that he does not get caught up in extremism.³

Furthermore, when a person is caught up in extremism and he is steered towards moderation, he must submit happily and practise on it. He must not dispute with the one who steers him. Instead, he must consider him to be his well-wisher. In the above incident, when Ḥadhrat Abū ad-Dardā’ radiyallāhu

¹ *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 4, pp. 209-211.

² Ibid.

³ Quoted from *al-Balāgh*, Karachi, Safar-Rabī’ ath-Thānī 1434 A.H.

'*anhu* got up at night for salāh, Hadrat Salmān radiyallāhu 'anhu asked him to go to sleep, and he went to sleep without any complaint or hesitation. He did not argue with Hadrat Salmān radiyallāhu 'anhu. He did not say: "You are an outsider [not from Madīnah] plus you are my guest, who are you to stop me from worship?"

The meaning of "Do not commit excesses in your Dīn"

After explaining the meaning of extremism, the verse which was quoted in the question – Do not commit excesses in your Dīn – is explained from *Ma'ārif al-Qur'an*.

Allāh *ta'ālā* says in *Sūrah an-Nisā'*:

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ

O people of the Book! (people of the Injīl) Do not transgress the limits as regards your religion (as regards true beliefs).

لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ

This verse prohibits the People of the Book from committing excesses in their religion. The literal meaning of *ghulūw* is to go beyond the limits. Imām Jassās rahimahullāh writes in *Ahkām al-Qur'an*:

الغلو في الدين هو مجاوزة حد الحق فيه

Ghulūw in Dīn refers to going beyond the limit which has been laid down for a certain thing in Dīn.

The People of the Book – Jews and Christians – are addressed because both committed this wrong and both succumbed to it. The Christians committed excesses as regards their beliefs in Hadrat 'Isā 'alayhis salām by elevating him to the level of God, the son of

God or a third God. The Jews committed excesses as regards rejecting Hadrat 'Īsā 'alayhis salām by not accepting him as a Prophet, accusing his chaste mother of adultery, and pointing a finger at his lineage.

Because the deviation and destruction of the Jews and Christians due to extremism in Dīn had come into the open, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam emphasised on the ummat to be extremely cautious in this regard. The *Musnad Ahmad* contains a narration of Hadrat 'Umar radiyallāhu 'anhu which states that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said:

لا تطروني كما أطرت النصارى عيسى بن مريم، فإنما أنا عبد، فقولوا: عبد الله
ورسوله.

Do not exaggerate in praising me as was done by the Christians in respect of 'Īsā ibn Maryam. Understand well that I am Allāh's slave, so refer to me as Allāh's slave and His Messenger.

In short, I am equal to everyone else as regards being a human and Allāh's slave. My greatest rank is that I am Allāh's Messenger. It is extremism to accord me anything more than this whereby you make me equal in Allāh's attributes. Do not get caught up in this extremism like the Christians. The extremism of the Jews and Christians was not directed at their Prophets alone. Rather, once they became habituated to it, they adopted the same approach to the disciples, followers and representatives of the Prophets. They elevated their Prophets to the level of divinity and believed that the followers of their Prophets were sinless. Furthermore, they did not investigate to check whether they are really followers of the Prophets who are upholding their true teachings, or they are merely

understood to be scholars and shaykhs by inheritance. Consequently, there came a time when their leadership went into the hands of people who were deviated themselves and increased their deviation. In this way, their religion was destroyed in the name of religion and religiosity. The Qur'an describes this condition of theirs in the following way:

إِتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهَبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ

They took their rabbis and monks as gods to the exclusion of Allāh.

In this way, they had already accorded divinity to their Prophets, and now they began worshipping their latter religious leaders in the name of being the followers of Messengers.

We learn from the above that extremism in Dīn is that destructive force which destroyed the religions of the past in the name of religion. This is why our master Hadrat Muḥammad Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam adopted full measures to save his ummat from this serious tribulation.

It is narrated in a Hadīth that on the occasion of ḥajj, when it was the time to pelt the Jamarāt, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam asked Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās radiyallāhu 'anhu to gather pebbles for him. He presented average-sized pebbles. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam really approved of them and said:

بمثلهن بمثلهن

The Jamarāt must be pelted with average-sized pebbles just like these.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam then added:

اياكم والغلو في الدين، فإنما هلك من قبلكم بالغلو في دينهم

Beware of committing excesses in Dīn. Nations before you were destroyed because of their excesses in their Dīn.

Important points

A few important points are learnt from this Hadīth:

1. The Sunnah size of the pebbles which are to be used to pelt the Jamarāt is that they must be average, neither too large nor too small. Carrying large rocks and throwing them is included in extremism in Dīn.
2. The Shar'ī limit of each thing is what Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam established through his words and actions. Going beyond them is extremism in Dīn.
3. It becomes clear that extremism in Dīn is defined as going beyond the Sunnah limit in a particular action.¹

We learn from the above tafsīr that in the verse under discussion, the People of the Book are prohibited from extremism in religion. You have transgressed the limit by applying it to the Sufis. This is impermissible in the light of another verse of the Qur'ān:

لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ

*Do not exceed the bounds in your religious matters other than the truth.*²

¹ *Ma'ārif al-Qur'ān*, vol. 2, pp. 619-620.

² *Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5: 77.

Fanā fī ash-shaykh

After explaining extremism, it is essential for you to understand the reality of fanā fī ash-shaykh which you consider to be extremism in Dīn.

Fanā (obliteration) does not refer to unilateral fanā. Rather it refers to obliterating one's will and own decisions. In other words, the murīd obliterates his own will and decisions and makes them subservient to the will and decisions of his shaykh. To put it in another way, fanā fī ash-shaykh refers to obliterating your temperament in the shaykh's temperament and your nature in the shaykh's nature in the sense that neither does your temperament remain nor your nature.

If we had to ponder over this, a person who is fanā fī ash-shaykh is – in reality – fanā fillāh which is the actual objective of the Sharī'at. To explain this further, in the path of sulūk, a shaykh-e-kāmil is really one who adheres to the Sharī'at. Acting on the injunctions of the Sharī'at has become his nature and temperament. Therefore, the fanā fī ash-shaykh of a person actually means he has submitted his will and decision to the will and decision of Allāh *ta'ālā* via his shaykh.

You referred to fanā fī ash-shaykh as extremism in Dīn whereas it is established from the Sharī'at. The following is stated in *Ta'lifāt-e-Rashīdiyyah*:

Question: What is the meaning of fanā fī ash-shaykh and fanā fī ar-Rasūl? Where is it proven from? What do the Sufis say with regard to it?

Answer: Both these words are terminologies of the Sufis. It refers to obedience and an overpowering love solely for Allāh's sake. It is established from the Sharī'at:

فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ

*Follow me and Allāh will love you.*¹

Proof for fanā fī ash-shaykh

Hakīmul Ummat Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī rahimahullāh writes in his *at-Takashshuf ‘an Muhimmāt at-Taṣawwuf* on the authority of *Bukhārī Sharīf* and *Abū Dāwūd Sharīf*:

عن عروة بن الزبير عن المسور بن مخرمة ومروان الحديث الطويل وفيه من قصة الحديبية: ثم إن عروة بن مسعود جعل يرمق أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بعينه، قال: فوالله ما ينتخم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بنخامة إلا وقعت في كف رجل منهم، فذلك بها وجهه وجلده، وإذا أمرهم ابتدروا أمره، وإذا توضأ كادوا يقتتلون على وضوئه، وإذا تكلم خفضوا أصواتهم عنده، وما يحدون النظر إليه تعظيما له.

وفي هذا الحديث: قال عمر بن الخطاب: فأتيت نبي الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقلت ألسنت نبي الله حقا قال «بلى». قلت ألسنا على الحق وعدونا على الباطل قال «بلى». قلت فلم نعطي الدنية في ديننا إذا قال «إني رسول الله، ولست أعصيه وهو ناصري». قلت أوليس كنت تحدثنا أنا سنأتي البيت فنطوف به قال «بلى، فأخبرتكم أنا نأتيه العام». قال قلت لا. قال «فإنك آتية ومطوف به». قال فأتيت أبا بكر فقلت يا أبا بكر، أليس هذا نبي الله حقا قال بلى. قلت ألسنا على الحق وعدونا على الباطل قال بلى. قلت فلم نعطي الدنية في ديننا إذا قال أيها الرجل، إنه لرسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - وليس يعصى ربه وهو ناصره، فاستمسك بغرزه، فوالله إنه على الحق.

¹ *Ta’lifāt-e-Rashīdiyyah*, p. 198.

قلت أليس كان يحدثنا أنا سنأقي البيت ونطوف به قال بلى، أفأخبرك أنك تأتيه العام قلت لا. قال فإنك آتية ومطوف به. قال عمر: فعملت لذلك أعمالا...

'Urwah ibn Zubayr radiyallāhu 'anhu narrates from Miswar ibn Makhramah and Marwān a lengthy Hadīth concerning the Treaty of Hudaybiyah. 'Urwah ibn Mas'ūd (one of the Makkan leaders who had come to spy on the Muslims and broker a peace treaty) began staring at the Companions of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam and reported: By Allāh, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam could not even sneeze without the mucus falling into the palm of one of his Companions who would then rub it over his face and skin. If he ordered them to do something, they would hasten to comply. When he performed wuḍū', they would almost kill each other for his wuḍū' water. When he spoke, they lowered their voices before him. None of them looked at him directly out of respect for him.

In the same Hadīth, 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb radiyallāhu 'anhu said (this was when Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam accepted certain conditions which appeared to be detrimental to the Muslims): I went to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam and said: "O Rasūlullāh! Are you not truly Allāh's Prophet?" He replied: "Indeed." I said: "Are we not on the truth while our enemies are on falsehood?" He replied: "Indeed." I said: "Why, then, are we accepting such humiliation with respect to our religion?" He said: "I am Allāh's Messenger. I will never disobey Him (whatever I have done was not in disobedience to Allāh ta'ālā) and He will certainly help me." I said: "Didn't you tell us that we will go to the Ka'bah and perform ṭawāf of it?" He replied: "Indeed. But did I say that you will go to it this year?" I said: "No." He said: "You will certainly go and perform ṭawāf of it." I then went to Abū Bakr

radiyallāhu ‘anhu and said: “O Abū Bakr! Is he not truly Allāh’s Messenger?” He replied: “Indeed.” I said: “Are we not on the truth while our enemies are on falsehood?” He replied: “Indeed.” I said: “Why, then, are we accepting such humiliation with respect to our religion?” He said: “Listen man! He is certainly Allāh’s Messenger. He will never disobey his Lord and He will certainly help him. Hold on firmly to him because he is certainly doing the right thing.” I said: “But didn’t he say to us that we would visit the Ka‘bah and perform tawāf of it?” He said: “Did he say that you will go this year?” I replied: “No.” He said: “You will certainly visit it and perform tawāf of it.” ‘Umar said: “I did many good deeds [to make up for my having questioned Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam in that manner]...”

Note: Excessive love for and devotion to one’s shaykh. The behaviour of the Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum as described in the first part of this Hadīth clearly proves the devotion of murīds to their shaykhs – more than what they accord to worldly authorities - and their love for them even to the extent of being prepared to lay their lives for them. However, it must not go beyond the limits of the Shari‘at.

Fanā fi ash-shaykh: Although this is not explicitly mentioned in this Hadīth, it is clearly proven after pondering over it. In the latter portion of this Hadīth, the answers of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr radiyallāhu ‘anhu were exactly in line with those of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam in word and in spirit. It is clearly proven from this that the heart of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr radiyallāhu ‘anhu was so attached to the heart of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam that he used to receive the same type of sciences and conditions. Attachment of this nature in view of the special Sufis

is known as fanā fi ash-shaykh. The presence of such an attribute is an absolute proof of the existence of people who possess such an attribute. When such a connection is proven from a Hadīth, this state – fanā fi ash-shaykh – is also proven. The reality of it is observed when there is affinity between a murīd and his shaykh. It develops from total obedience and love.¹

Faqīhul Ummat Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Maḥmūd Hasan Gangohī *rahimahullāh* said:

If a shaykh's focus is not directed at a murīd, the latter cannot move forward. It is the shaykh's focus which really takes him forward. However, it requires fanā' fi ash-shaykh, faith in him and love for him.²

The reality of fanā fi ash-shaykh has been clarified from the above lines. Now you tell me! Is fanā fi ash-shaykh extremism in Dīn or does it entail strict adherence to the Sharī'at? You must realize well that it is one of the special terminologies of the Sufis. As long as you do not know the realities of these terminologies, you must not make undue objections against them. An objection against the genuine Sufis is no less than a major sin as regards its harm.

Who is an extremist?

You labelled those who are attached to khānqāhs and the genuine Sufis as extremists. The fact of the matter is that extremist ways and mannerisms are adopted daily by those of the general public who are Tabliḡhīs. A person knowing a little about Dīn and having a bit of Dīnī knowledge is aware of this.

¹ *at-Takashshuf 'an Muhimmāt at-Taṣawwuf*, pp. 390-392.

² *Malfūzāt Faqīhul Ummat*, vol. 6, p. 38.

Based on the sincere efforts of the founder of the Tablighī Jamā'at Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and his deputies, the objectives of the founder being in line with the principles of the Shari'at, the full support of the seniors of the ummat, love for the jamā'at and its activities, and the excellent effects and results of the work of the jamā'at throughout the world; the 'ulamā' and mashā'ikh of the khānqāhs always came to the defence of the Jamā'at and are still doing so.

In order to bring this matter to your attention, a few examples of extremism committed by Tablighī laymen and the 'ulamā's defence of them are presented. Only the questions are quoted here.

Ten examples of Tablighī extremism

1. The Tablighīs say: The ummah has committed a major crime by giving up da'wat (referring to the present Tablighī Jamā'at).¹
2. Some of the senior elders of Tabligh say: This is the only way of reviving Dīn among the masses. This work is on the system of prophet-hood. Apart from it, other forms of tabligh in which the mashā'ikh and others are occupied are less beneficial; in fact, they consider them to be futile.²
3. A Tablighī person delivered a talk: Hadrat Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was in fact an ilhāmī³ Prophet. The Prophets used to receive waḥī (revelation). However, the Maulānā

¹ *Fatāwā Dār al-'Ulūm Zakariyyā*, vol. 1, p. 443.

² *Fatāwā Maḥmūdīyyah*, vol. 4, p. 248.

³ One who receives inspiration.

was such a Prophet who received inspiration as regards every approaching event. It was as though he was an ilhāmī Prophet.¹

4. A person who is attached to the Tablighī Jamā'at says: "All the Dīnī efforts apart from Da'wat are against the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. For example, the efforts against Shī'ism are harmful to the ummat." He also said: "The khatm-e-nubūwwat movement made no contribution to the ummat."²
5. Our Tablighī brothers say: The guidance and rectification of the entire Muslim ummat can only and only be realized through the present Jamā'at programme.³
6. You have an 'ālim, muftī and teacher who is only occupied in teaching, delivering talks and issuing fatwās. Another 'ālim is working on the present system (Tablighī system). The latter is better than that teacher.⁴
7. The members of the Tablighī Jamā'at constantly repeat in their talks and lectures: The one who does not give time in Allāh's path is deviated and there is no īmān in him.⁵
8. The Tablighī brothers instructed us to close the tafsīr of the Qur'ān and ordered us to teach the Tablighī book.⁶

¹ *Fatāwā Maḥmūdīyyah*, vol. 4, p.291.

² *Āp Ke Masā'il Aur Oen Kā Ḥull*, vol. 8, p. 199.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. vol. 8, p. 201.

⁵ Ibid. vol. 8, p. 202.

⁶ *Maḥmūd al-Fatāwā (Gujarati)*, vol. 1, p. 419.

9. A few Tablighī brothers began ta'lim of the Tablighī book in a loud tone after the salāh, forcing the rest of the people to perform their salāhs at home. They provide the practice at the Markaz in Nizām ad-Dīn Delhi as proof. They threatened the lives of those who tried to put a stop to the ta'lim.¹
10. The Tablighī brothers erased Ahādīth from the notice board under the pretext that the actual work of Da'wat is Dīn in its entirety.²

You can refer to the original books and take a look at the entire discussions. Just look at the extent of extremism! Despite all this, the Deobandī 'ulamā' and muftīs never issued a fatwā stating that it is impermissible to join the Tablighī Jamā'at because of this extremism, or that this Jamā'at is not on the truth. Rather, they always defended the work of the Jamā'at and considered this [extremism] to be the shortcoming of certain individuals. They tried to find an explanation for their actions, or said that they are based on misunderstanding or lack of understanding.

Finally, a question and its answer are quoted from *Maḥmūd al-Fatāwā*:

A Tablighī lecturer quotes the incident of Heraclius

Question: A speaker related an incident which he quoted from *Hayātus Sahābah* (compiled by Hadrat Maulānā Yūsuf Ṣāhib Kāndhlawī *rahimahullāh*). A few Companions of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam present themselves to King Heraclius to invite him to Islam. The king shows them a few images which were stored in a box. These were images of

¹ *Maḥmūd al-Fatāwā (Gujarati)*, vol. 1, pp. 423-424.

² *Ibid.* pp. 433-434.

different Prophets. He even shows them an image of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa ṣallam* and acknowledges that he is a Messenger of Allāh. Finally, he refuses to embrace Islam by saying: “I am prepared to become the worst slave of the one who treats his slave in the most oppressive manner, but I am not prepared to embrace Islam.”

Further on in his speech, the speaker said: “Islam had become clear to him and he knew that it is the truth. The signs of it being the truth were made obvious to him. Despite this, he refused to embrace Islam. (This speech was delivered in our local masjid after the gusht. Therefore, bearing in mind the occasion, he was encouraging us to take part in Tablīgh). The speaker continues: “We learn from this incident that to merely consider a work to be the truth and believe it to be correct or very good is not enough for salvation. It is not guidance. As is the case with a large section of our ummat today and many people among us consider this work of Da‘wat to be correct. However, when they are asked to go out [in Jamā‘at]... what can we say!”

Is it correct for the speaker to use the above-related incident [of Heraclius] and make the conclusions which he made from it? If it is correct, what can be said about those senior ‘ulamā’ who never spent their time in this specific type of programme [of Tablīgh]? This, notwithstanding the fact that throughout their lives they consider this work to be correct and encourage others towards it as well. Kindly provide a detailed and referenced answer.

Answer: All praise is due to Allāh *ta‘ālā*. Peace and salutations to Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa ṣallam*.

Before understanding the answer to your question, it is essential to understand the Shar'ī status of the present day Tablighī Jamā'at.

Hadrat Muftī A'zam Faqīhul Ummat Maulānā Muftī Maḥmūd Hasan Sāhib *rahimahullāh* responds to this question as follows: “A person says that it is fard-e-'ayn to go out in the Tablighī Jamā'at.” He replies:

The fact of the matter is that it is fard-e-'ayn to learn Dīn. One way of doing it is to study in a madrasah. Another is to go out in Tabligh. There are many other ways as well. The people of Mewāt were told that it is fard on them to learn Dīn. To this end, they must establish madāris or choose other ways. If they cannot, then they must go out in Tabligh. Thus, there [in Mewāt] people go out saying: “Go out to learn Dīn.” There is no difference of opinion in this regard.¹

Observe another question and answer:

Question: What is the status of the present Tablighī Jamā'at in the light of the Qur'ān and Hadith?

Answer: It is one of the ways of learning Dīn, becoming firm in it and propagating it. If it is done in line with the principles then experience has proved that it is extremely beneficial.²

The incident of Heraclius which you quoted from a certain speaker is an issue related to Islam and kufr.

¹ *Fatāwā Maḥmūdīyyah*, vol. 1, p. 453.

² *Ibid.* p. 423.

While those to whom he wants to apply it belong to different departments of Dīn, each of which is essential and important in its respective place. Therefore, the conclusion which he came to from this incident is either based on misunderstanding or crooked understanding. All departments of Dīn are required. We can say with regard to those who are dedicated to a certain department and rendering services to it that: They do not enjoy the special benefits of rendering services to other departments. However – Allāh forbid – it is extremely hazardous to think that they are not on the truth, misguided, or worthy of castigation because they do not take part in a specific department. It is essential to abstain from such thoughts.

Observe the following question and answer:

Question: What is the ruling of the Sharī'at with respect to a person who does not join the Tablighī Jamā'at, does not go for gusht and 40 days?

Answer: He will not acquire the benefits of these actions.¹

The above-mentioned speaker's line of thought and conclusion are therefore not correct.

One point should be remembered. Individuals who are active in their respective department of Dīn must ensure that the department in which they are involved must take precedence. Teaching and learning must take precedence in the centres of knowledge (madāris). Assemblies of dhikr, purification of deeds and spiritual striving must take precedence in the

¹ *Fatāwā Maḥmūdīyyah*, vol. 1, p. 423.

khānqāhs. The work of Tablīgh and Da'wat must take precedence in the centres of Tablīgh and Da'wat. If this is observed – Allāh willing – all the departments will progress. The precedence of a specific type of work in a specific department of Dīn is desirable so that it progresses by leaps and bounds. If anyone – due to his crooked thinking – belittles or refutes any Dīnī activity, or scorns any other work, it will not be referred to as precedence in that activity but extremism. And extremism in Dīn is despised and rejected. If the people in the madāris belittle the khānqāhs and Tablīgh work, the khānqāhs belittle the madāris and Tablīgh work, and the Tablīghīs consider their work to be the only work and scorn other works; then their attitude is certainly despicable and worthy of despise. That is all. Allāh *ta'ālā* knows best.

Dictated by: Aḥmad Khānpūrī.

15 Ramaḍān al-Mubārak 1427 A.H.

I concur with the answer - 'Abbās Dāwūd Bismillāh.¹

The People of Taṣawwuf Consider Obedience to The Shaykh to be Essential in Every Matter

Question: Can a shaykh and spiritual mentor be ma'sūm like the Prophets and angels? Can a spiritual prescription and treatment of a shaykh be absolute? If the answer is in the negative, why is it that murīds consider obedience to the shaykh to be absolute and essential? If a person acts to the contrary, they consider it to be hazardous and destructive in Dīn.

Answer: The Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah unanimously believes that the Prophets and angels

¹ *Maḥmūd al-Fatāwā*, vol. 3, pp. 208-212.

are ma'sūm.¹ No matter how pious and righteous a shaykh and murīd may be, they are not ma'sūm.²

This is why the methodologies of rectification of the mashā'ikh in each era were different. Each one prescribed a treatment which he experienced to be most beneficial or was tried and tested for spiritual ailments.

Tadhkiratur Rashīd states:

There are numerous evil characteristics, but the majority have restricted them to ten. The essence of all ten is said to be pride (*takabbur*). If this is removed, the others will automatically be removed. A person remained in the company of Hadrat Junayd Baghdādī *rahimahullāh* for twenty years. He said to him one day: “Hadrat, I remained with you for so long but I did not acquire anything from you.” This person enjoyed a lofty and senior position in his family and tribe. Hadrat Junayd *rahimahullāh* understood that there is pride in his heart, so he said to him: “Very well, you must do one thing for me. You must fill a bowl of walnuts, sit with it at the entrance of the *khānqāh*, and announce: ‘Anyone who strikes me once with his shoe shall receive one walnut, the one who strikes me twice shall receive two walnuts...’ continue increasing the number in this way. Once the bowl of walnuts is empty, you must come to me.”

¹ Divinely protected from sin.

² *Sharh 'Aqā'id*, pp. 139-141.

The person replied: “*Lā ilāha illallāh Muḥammadur Rasūlullāh* – Hadrat, I can never do this.” Hadrat Junayd *raḥimahullāh* said to him: “It is a blessed *kalimah* which, if a seventy year old *kāfir* reads it with sincerity, then by Allāh, he will become a believer. But by your reading it now, you have become a rejecter of the Tarīqat. Get away from here, you will not acquire anything from me.”¹

Now tell me! If this treatment is prescribed for the removal of pride in our times, will any murīd be able to bear it? Never.

Obedience to the shaykh is only in lawful matters; not in unlawful matters. This is why it is necessary to sever ties from a shaykh who does things which are against the Shari‘at.

Hadrat Gangohī *raḥimahullāh* writes:

The practices of the Sufis are forms of treatment. The origins of all are proven from the texts just as medical treatment itself is proven. However, *sharbat-e-banafsha*² is not proven from an explicit text. In the same way, the original form all *adhkār* (pl. of dhikr) is established just as the origins for torpedoes and guns are proven even though they were not prevalent in those days. It is therefore not a bid‘ah. Yes, it is a bid‘ah to consider specific ways to be essential Sunnats. The

¹ *Tadhkiratur Rashīd*, vol. 2, p. 13.

² The name of any other medication can be substituted here, e.g. paracetamol. (translator)

‘ulamā’ clearly state that it is bid‘ah to think in such a manner.¹

A murīd considers obedience to his shaykh to be essential because he pledged bay‘at to him and promised loyalty to him. It is necessary to fulfil one’s promise. Acting to the contrary results in worldly and Dīnī harm.

The following is stated in *Anfās-e-‘Īsā*:

Even if a shaykh errs in his method of rectification for which he is even reprimanded lovingly, the murīd will benefit by acting on it. The reason for this is that Allāh *ta‘ālā* is the one who provides benefit. When He sees a genuine quest from the seeker and that he is firm in his obedience to His walī, He shows mercy on him even if the shaykh has erred. Obedience and submission are great things in this path. I have not come across deprivation coupled with obedience to the shaykh. At the same time, I have not come across success coupled with conceitedness.²

Proof For a Murīd/Shaykh Relationship

Question: The Sufis claim that shaykhs/murīds are necessary in every era – they are essential. If this is the case, why do we not find clear evidence of this from the Qur‘ān, Aḥādīth and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* so that a fixed and permanent

¹ *Ta’līfāt-e-Rashīdiyyah*, p. 194.

² *Anfās-e-‘Īsā*, vol. 1, p. 60.

programme could be agreed upon and the ummat is saved from mutual differences?

Answer: Gauging from your words: “why do we not find a clear evidence of this from the Qur’ān, Ahādith and Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam?” it seems that you did not even search [for the evidence]. Had you done, you would not have posed such a question.

Observe the following evidence for bay’at from the Qur’ān...

The following is contained in *Fatāwā Maḥmūdīyyah*:

Question: A person says that this system of shaykhs and murīds is the way of yogis and idolaters. They do less positive works and more negative ones. In fact, all their works are negative in the sense that you cannot do this, you cannot do that, and so on. This system has reduced man into a paralysed and stroke-afflicted person. In short, there is no good in this system. It is also not proven from the Qur’ān and Sunnat. The bay’at of Islam is established from Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam in the sense that it would bring a kāfir into Islam. But there was no bay’at for those who are already Muslims.

I could not give an answer to this person. I personally experience the benefits of bay’at but do not have the means to answer this person. Kindly provide an answer.

Answer: All praise is due to Allāh *ta’ālā*. Salutations to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam. Ask that person to read the following verse of Sūrah al-Fath:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ

Surely those who pledge allegiance to you are actually pledging allegiance to Allāh.

A few verses further down, Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ

Allāh was pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you under the tree.

Here we see bay'at being taken from not just believers but from the most senior Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* who included those who had embraced Islam in Makkah Mukarramah and had already borne many hardships for the sake of Islam. They are listed among the early Muhājirūn and had continually joined Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam in the various battles. This bay'at was not for embracing Islam. They had embraced it long before. In fact, their Islam was extremely strong.

Now read the following from Sūrah al-Mumtaḥinah:

يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِفْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعْنَهُنَّ...

O Prophet! If believing women come to you in order to pledge to you that they will not ascribe any partners with Allāh, they will not steal, they will not commit adultery, they will not kill their children, they will not fabricate a slander between their hands and their feet, and they will not disobey you in any good deed, then accept the pledge from them...¹

Allāh *ta'ālā* instructs the acceptance of bay'at for six things, all of which are negative. If one ponders carefully, one will deduce that the sixth point

¹ Sūrah al-Mumtaḥinah, verse 12.

encompasses all positives. That is, they will not disobey Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam in any good deed. This means that they will obey every order. This appears to be a negative but in reality it is the greatest positive. Apart from these references, accepting bay'at from certain Ṣahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum for specific matters is also established.

When the pious elders of Dīn accept bay'at, they do not do it in emulation of yogis and idolaters. Rather, they do it in emulation of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. They ask the person to repent explicitly, prohibit him from all acts of disobedience, and prepare the person towards obedience to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. This is clearly stated in a Hadīth:

عن عبادة بن الصامت رضى الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال وحوله عصابة من أصحابه: بايعوني على أن لا تشركوا بالله شيئاً، ولا تسرقوا، ولا تزنوا، ولا تقتلوا أولادكم، ولا تأتوا ببهتان تفترونه بين أيديكم وأرجلكم، ولا تعصوا في معروف، فمن وفى منكم فأجره على الله، ومن أصاب من ذلك شيئاً فعوقب في الدنيا فهو كفارة له، ومن أصاب من ذلك شيئاً ثم ستره الله، فهو إلى الله إن شاء عفا عنه، وإن شاء عاقبه. فبايعناه على ذلك. (متفق عليه)

'Ubādah ibn as-Sāmīṭ radiyallāhu 'anhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said while a group of his Companions were around him: "Pledge allegiance to me that you will not ascribe any partner to Allāh, you will not steal, you will not commit adultery, you will not kill your children, you will not fabricate a slander between your hands and feet, and you will not disobey in carrying out any good. Whoever from among you fulfils this shall be rewarded by Allāh. Whoever commits any of these prohibitions and is punished for them in this world, it will be an atonement for him.

Whoever commits any of them and Allāh conceals it [in this world], it is left to Allāh to either pardon him or punish him.” We pledged allegiance to him over this.

This is the method of bay‘at by all the mashā‘ikh of ṭaṣawwuf, viz. the Chishtīs, Qādrīs, Naqshbandīs and Suhrawardīs. Large numbers of people acquire spiritual purification through them, realize a bond with Allāh *ta‘ālā*, have their evil characteristics removed, and embellish themselves with noble characteristics.

That is all. Allāh alone inspires to what He loves and what He is pleased with.¹

In his commentary to the verse on bay‘at in Sūrah al-Mumtaḥinah,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا...

Hadrat Thānwī raḥimahullāh writes:

This verse is a clear proof for bay‘at.²

Anfās-e-‘Īsā states:

This programme of shaykh/murīd is a pledge of obedience on the part of the murīd and a pledge of instruction and rectification on the part of the shaykh. Pledging bay‘at – placing one’s hand into the hand of the shaykh – is neither the objective nor is it required for the realization of any objective. It is merely a custom of the mashā‘ikh. The reality of bay‘at is: The murīd must adhere to

¹ *Fatāwā Maḥmūdīyyah*, vol. 4, pp. 400-401.

² *Bayān al-Qur‘ān*, (under *Masā‘il as-Sulūk*).

obedience while the shaykh must adhere to teaching and instruction. If such a pledge is done verbally or by a state (pledge is sometimes effected by a state or condition), the bay'at is realized. If the shaykh does not teach and instruct his murīd, he will be acting against his promise and he will be committing an act of treachery.¹

If The Focus of a Shaykh Ensures Guidance, Why Could Abū Tālib Not Embrace Islam Through The Blessed Focus of Rasūlullāh?

Question: The following outrageous claim is made among Sufi circles: The Ahlullāh make an impression on the hearts of their murīds through focus and affectionate gaze. The blessings of this focus results in the rectification of the hearts of the murīds. In fact, there are times when this focus of the shaykh results in outsiders getting the inspiration for guidance and imān. If this is correct in the Sharī'at, why could the Chief of all past and future generations Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* not instil guidance in the heart of his beloved uncle, Abū Tālib? Allāh forbid, was he deprived of such focus from Allāh *ta'ālā*? We seek refuge in saying such a thing and from showing disrespect.

Answer: Focus is a type of influence which is not within man's choice. Let alone piety, focus does not even require imān. The focus of non-Muslims can also be effective for certain periods of time. Nevertheless, focus is proven from the Qur'an, Hadīth and countless incidents of the righteous. Observe the following:

¹ *Anfās-e-'Īsā*, pp. 39-40.

The origin of focus

Ḥaḍrat Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Muḥaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Tafsīr ‘Azīzī*:

The first sign and effect of divine revelation coming to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* was in the form of true dreams. Whatever he saw in his dreams would be experienced by him exactly like that while in a state of wakefulness. He was then made to become attracted to solitude. Subsequently, he would go alone to the cave of Hirā’ and engage in Allāh’s remembrance. He used to take as much as one week’s food and provisions for himself. When the food and drink were finished, he would return home, get more food and drink, and go back to the cave. In most cases, his stay used to be for less than a month. Occasionally he even stayed over for a full month.

One day he was standing out of the cave to wash his mouth when Jibra’īl *‘alayhis salām* suddenly called out: “O Muḥammad!” He looked up but did not see anything. He heard this voice a second and third time, and began looking around in confusion. Suddenly a face which was glittering like the sun, in the form of a human, decorated with a crown of light on his head and wearing green clothes appeared before Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* and began saying: “Read!” Some narrations state that he had a green silken cloth in his hand. Something was written on it. He presented it to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* and said: “Read.” Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* said: “I cannot read.” The person said: “Read!” He embraced Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* and squeezed him so tightly that he felt constricted and began perspiring. This happened three times. On the fourth occasion he said:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ، خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ، اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ، الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ، عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ.

Read in the name of your Sustainer who is the creator of all. He created man from a clot of blood. Read, and your Sustainer is the most bountiful. Who taught by the pen. He taught man what he did not know.¹

These five verses settled in Rasūlullāh's mind and were memorised by him.

He writes further on:

The circumstances surrounding this initial revelation to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* contains a few points which must be borne in mind.

Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* then writes four points. He writes under the third point:

Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām* was ordered to squeeze Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* so that the effect of Jibra'īl may become firmly embedded – to the point of perfection – in the blessed soul of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. The effect of the perfect servants of Allāh *ta'ālā*, which the people of the Tarīqat refer to as *tawajjuh* (focus) is divided into four categories.

Types of tawajjuh

1. Ta'thīr In'ikāsī: The example of this is of a person who applies a lot of perfume and comes into an assembly. The fragrance of his perfume perfumes the mind of every person sitting in that assembly. This is the weakest type of tawajjuh because its effect only remains for as long as the person is in the company of

¹ Sūrah al-'Alaq, 96: 1-5.

a Walī. Once he leaves, the effect does not remain with him.

2. Ta'thīr Ilqā'ī: The example of this is of a person who pours oil into a container and places a wick into it. He then comes to a person who has a fire. He touches the wick to the fire, it takes light and becomes a lamp. This effect and focus is stronger than the first type because its effect continues even after the assembly. However, if any calamity or impediment comes upon it, it will leave. In this case, although the lamp was lit, a sudden gush of wind or rain came upon it and extinguished it. This effect cannot culture and rectify the self and the senses.

3. Ta'thīr Iṣlāhī: Through his spiritual power, the mentor rectifies the inner self of the murīd and the senses are put into motion. The example of this is of a person who brings water from a river or well and stores it in one place. He makes canals which connect this water to a pond which has a fountain. He clears the canals of all dirt and grime, and releases the water with full pressure so that the water now gushes forth from the fountain.

This type of effect is stronger than the first two. The self is rectified and the senses are cultured. However, its effect is dependent on the amount of water which is stored, and the extent and cleanliness of the canals. It is not according to the capability of the river or well. However, despite this, if any calamity or weakness befalls the treasure [of water], there will be a drop in the effect.

4. Ta'thīr Ittihādī: Through his spiritual power, the Sufī master takes the murīd under his wing and joins his soul to his murīd's soul in such a way that the excellences of his soul are transferred into the soul of the murīd. This is the strongest type of effect.

Once this is realized, there is no need for going repeatedly to the shaykh to derive benefit from him.¹

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes the following points after relating the incident at the cave of Hirā':

The angel who came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* was Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām*. When he asked Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* to read, it was not required of him to read something which he had learnt before. Rather, it was similar to a teacher displaying the letters a, b, c to a child and asking him to read. In other words, you must read what I show you. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* replied: "I cannot read." This could be in the sense that his blessed mind did not go to the meaning of *Iqra'*. Alternatively, he assumed from the circumstances that Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām* will make him read something which – in order for him to grasp and understand it – required him to be able to read and write from before hand. No matter what, in order to receive and accept what he has been ordered to read, there was a need to strengthen and perfect his capability. It was for this reason that the angel squeezed him several times. In this way, the strength which he receives will enable his heart to focus and gain courage. The

¹ *Tafsīr 'Azizī*, pp. 559-563, Kutub Khānah Fayḍ-e-Abrār.

action of *tawajjuh* is proven from this Hadīth.¹

The reality of *taṣarruf*

Imdād al-Fatāwā volume five contains a booklet of Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* titled *at-Ta'arruf fī Tahqīq at-Taṣarruf*. It has been translated by Hadrat Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. A few quotations from it are presented here.

The reality of *taṣarruf*: The reality of it is for special praiseworthy feelings to be conferred on another person. This results in special effects on him. Due to the various objectives and purposes of these effects, they take on different categories and colours. In the terminology of the Sufis, it is known as *taṣarruf* (influence), *tawajjuh* (focus), *himmat* (courage) and *jam'e khawātir* (gathering of thoughts).

Further on, he writes under the heading *Tanbīhāt* (cautions):

First caution: Is this *taṣarruf* which the Sufis resort to a Sunnat of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam? Whatever I have been able to gather in this regard has been explained in part two of my booklet, *at-Tarā'if wa az-Zarā'if*. I feel it will suffice to quote it verbatim here. It is: It is narrated from authentic Ahādīth that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam struck his hand on the chests of certain people resulting in their whisperings leaving them. He placed his blessed hand

¹ *At-Takashshuf*, pp. 430-431.

on certain sick people and their illness left them. Some people may assume that he resorted to taṣarruf here. It is also not far-fetched for a person to furnish these narrations as proof that resorting to taṣarruf is Sunnat. However, if we ponder over this, we can conclude that this proof is incomplete. The reason for this is that in order for his action to be a taṣarruf, it will have to be proven through an authentic narration that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* accumulated his spiritual powers in order to produce these results [e.g. removing whisperings, getting rid of an illness]. And this is not proven. In fact, it is possible that he resorted to these actions because he was informed via divine revelation that they will be beneficial to them without having to resort to gathering of his thoughts (concentration) and applying his taṣarruf. Based on this possibility, these actions are most certainly not included in the taṣarruf as defined by the Sufis. This is why all the ‘ulamā’ of the ummat list these incidents among Rasūlullāh’s miracles which are totally different from taṣarruf. The most clear indication that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* never resorted to taṣarruf is that he did not resort to it on the heart of Abū Tālīb despite his extreme desire and wish for him to embrace Islam. Instead, he sufficed on making du‘ā’ for his imān and inviting him to Islam. Even if the performance of taṣarruf is at any time accepted with regard to him, it will not

prove that it is Sunnat in the definition of the Shari'at. The reason for this is that for an act to be Sunnat in the definition of the Shari'at, it has to be practised. This is why wrestling is not referred to as Sunnat. This, notwithstanding the fact that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam wrestled against Rukānah radiyallāhu 'anhu on one occasion. In fact, even if it is proven to be his habit, it will not be termed a Sunnat-e-Maqṣūdah because it is not necessary for a habitual Sunnat to be an act of worship.

Second caution: Is taṣarruf a sign of wilāyat, piety and acceptance in the sight of Allāh *ta'ālā*? The answer to this is that it is definitely not. Just as other bodily powers, hands, feet, etc. are used, so is the case with taṣarruf. This was explained previously.¹

Hadrat Thānwī's book, *Shari'at Aur Tariqat* contains the following:

A lengthy Hadith of Hadrat Ubayy ibn Ka'b radiyallāhu 'anhu contains the following:

فلما رأى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما قد غشيني ضرب في صدري ففضت عرقاً، وكأنما أنظر إلى الله خوفاً. (الحديث رواه مسلم)

When Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam saw me in the condition which had overcome me, he struck my chest causing me to break out into a sweat. It was as though I was looking at Allāh ta'ālā out of fear.

¹ *Imdād al-Fatāwā*, vol. 5, pp. 231-233.

The striking of the hand which resulted in this condition is known as taṣarruf. Some people are naturally qualified for taṣarruf even though they may not enjoy affinity with Allāh *ta'ālā*. All it requires is expending one's courage and will. If others also have a strong courage, they can stop it. The different ways of taṣarruf are dependent solely on practice.

Diyā' al-Qulūb states:

Strange and unique forms of taṣarruf are not acquired without first acquiring the bond of self-obliteration and continuity. At the same time, practice or one's innate power is also a prerequisite for it to be beneficial in Dīn. This is because the fundamental goal of a seeker is benefit in Dīn. The strange and unique forms of taṣarruf referred to are those which are connected to sulūk.

Two levels of tawajjuh and taṣarruf

There are two types of taṣarruf and having an effect. One is to have an effect on a murīd's inner self through which he develops a pull towards Allāh *ta'ālā*. The other is to have an effect on other things of this world, either through courage or supplication.

There are two levels of taṣarruf. One is involuntary in the sense that the heart desires for enthusiasm, love for Allāh *ta'ālā*, fear of Him and so on to be developed in a certain person. He must make du'ā' for the person. There is no harm in it. The second level is the well-known one in the terminology of the Sufis. It entails the shaykh emptying his heart of all dangers and focuses on something specific. He works his imagination with the intention of having an effect or influence. Although this is permissible it is

temperamentally disliked. The doer in such a situation is the force of lightening which is placed within man. This force is also found to a large extent in the ground. The falling of a person's gaze on someone has an effect on the person. The source of mesmerism and tawajjuh which is known to us is the same. The only difference between the two is that one is utilized for a bad purpose and the other for a good one. It is dependent on practice. This is why they practise instilling affinity into others. Some mashā'ikh resort to this practice a lot. However, its benefit does not remain. The one who seeks spiritual feeling, considers it to be beneficial and therefore feels it is enough. This is why he gives up doing good.

There are a few doubts about it: (1) It is not related in the Sunnat. (2) Most people become lazy in carrying out good works. While there is no harm in having an effect on others, the person who practises tawajjuh has no tawajjuh whatsoever towards Allāh *ta'ālā* at the time when he is practising it. If someone objects and says that there is no tawajjuh towards Allāh *ta'ālā* even in normal ordinary conversations, the answer to him is that this is more serious because the heart has been wilfully emptied [in order to focus on the person]. It seems shameful to have one's tawajjuh shifted away from Allāh *ta'ālā*. This is what normally happens in the circles of tawajjuh.

The prescribed method of rectification is lecturing, advising and du'ā'. Total tawajjuh is the right of Allāh *ta'ālā*. However, it has certain etiquette. (1) One is that the objective and method must be permissible. (2) There must be no external or internal ostentation. A good way of ensuring this is to accompany it with du'ā', as we are taught du'ā' in the Hadīth. (3) One must not practise it too much for it could be a

tribulation for the doer and the one on whom it is practised. This is why we do not find excessive mention of it with regard to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. Some people have committed excesses in this regard and the resulting tribulations bear testimony to it. The worst tribulation in this regard is that it is generally considered to be a feat of perfection, whereas this practice is solely out of necessity.

والضروي يتقدر بقدر الضرورة

A necessity is calculated according to the level of necessity and suffice with what is necessary.

Some elders clearly stated that when dhikr does not have any effect on a murīd, the shaykh could resort to tawajjuh. The reason is the same:

تقدر بقدر الضرورة

Suffice with what is necessary.

Some ignorant people incorrectly assume that the conveying of blessings and benefit is in the control of the shaykh. *Muslim Sharīf* contains a Hadīth of Hadrat Abū Hurayrah radīyallāhu 'anhu with reference to the verse:

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ

You cannot guide whom you will. Rather, it is Allāh who guides whomever He wills.¹

He says: This verse was revealed with reference to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. He was

¹ Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ, 28: 56.

encouraging his uncle, Abū Tālib, towards Islam (and he was not paying heed).

This Hadīth rectifies this wrong assumption completely, viz. when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* does not have such a power, how can it ever be possible for others!?

Bearing in mind that Dīnī benefit – which is the fundamental task of a shaykh – is totally out of his control, conveying worldly benefit will be even more out of his control. Many ignorant people are caught up in this misunderstanding. We seek refuge in Allāh *ta’ālā*. They believe that the Ahlullāh have all divine powers. This belief has also been rectified by the above text of the Qur’ān.¹

Tawajjuh has a temporary effect

Another point which has to be understood is that the effect which results from tawajjuh is temporary. It is not lasting.

The following is contained in the *Malfūzāt* of Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*:

If someone thinks that notorious evil people were automatically rectified by the tawajjuh of certain Sufis, it should be understood that this is a type of *taṣarruf* which is neither within one’s choice nor is it essential for piety. Many Sufis have no power of *taṣarruf* whatsoever. Furthermore, *taṣarruf* has no permanency. It is similar to a person sitting near an oven. As long as he remains there, his entire body will experience warmth. The

¹ *Sharī‘at Aur Tarīqat*, pp. 361-364.

moment he moves away from it, his body will turn cold. On the other hand, the effect which results from determination and good deeds is long lasting. It is similar to a person who consumes *Kushta-e-Tilā* in order to create heat within his body. Even if he were to go to the Shimlah mountain, the heat within himself will remain as it was.¹

We learn from the above statement that it is not within a person's control to bring a person onto the straight path through tawajjuh, just as it is not in the control of any person to guide someone. Tawajjuh is beneficial and effective only if Allāh *ta'ālā* wills.

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ، وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

*You cannot guide whom you will. Rather, it is Allāh who guides whomever He wills. He knows best those who are guided.*²

Therefore, your objection that “if the tawajjuh of a shaykh is a means for rectitude and guidance, how is it that Rasūlullāh's tawajjuh in respect of his beloved uncle, Abū Tālib, could not result in his guidance?” is baseless. If, according to you, every tawajjuh of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is accepted as beneficial for guidance, it would mean that on whoever he applied his tawajjuh, that person most definitely ought to become a Muslim. After all, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* was commissioned for the guidance of all humanity. It was Rasūlullāh's earnest desire for every person to be endowed with the wealth

¹ *Anfās-e-'Īsā*, vol. 1, pp. 14-15.

² Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ, 28: 56.

of īmān. So much so that Allāh *ta'ālā* had to tell him not to be too saddened by the unbelievers' abstention from īmān:

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ عَلَى آثَارِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا

*Would you, perhaps, destroy yourself with grief over them if they do not believe in this message?*¹

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* had taken the names of certain unbelievers (like Abū Jahal) and made du'ā' for their guidance. Despite this, they were not blessed with guidance. It is obvious that to take the name of a person and make du'ā' for him entails focussing totally on that person (tawajjuh).

Refusal – one of the reasons for the ineffectiveness of tawajjuh

Sometimes the shaykh who is practising tawajjuh is an expert, but the murīd has no determination and confidence in the shaykh. In fact, he is refusing him. In such a case, the tawajjuh of even an expert shaykh is ineffective. Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Waṣīyyullāh Sāhib Allāhābādī raḥimahullāh has written two articles on this subject, *'Āqibah al-Inkār* and *I'tiqād Wa Inkār*. These are contained in *Ta'lifāt Musliḥul Ummat*. We present a quotation from it:

Bahjah an-Nufūs, a commentary of *Bukhārī Sharīf* relates the following incident from an erudite scholar:

حكي عن بعض الفضلاء المحققين أنه أتاه شخص يريد السلوك، فأدخله للخلاوة وتركه أياماً، ثم دخل عليه وقال له: كيف ترى صورتي عندك؟ فقال: صورة خنزير، فقال الشيخ: صدقت، ثم تركه في خلوته أياماً، ثم دخل عليه وسأله مثل الأولى، فقال

¹ Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 6.

له: صورة كلب، ثم كذلك: إلى أن قال له: صورة القمر ليلة كماله، فقال له: صدقت الآن، كمل حالك، وحينئذ أخرجه من الخلوة. (بهجة النفوس: ١-٨٤)

A person came to an erudite shaykh with the intention of sulūk. The shaykh instructed him to remain in solitude and left him there for a few days. The shaykh then went to him and asked: "What do you make of my appearance?" The person replied: "You look like a pig." The shaykh said: "You are right." The shaykh left him in his solitude for a few days and went back to him and asked him the same question. The person said: "You look like a dog." The shaykh left him and this continued until one day the person said: "You look like the full moon." The shaykh said: "Your condition has been set right now." He then asked him to come out of seclusion.

Look! We learn from this incident that a murīd sees his own self in the shaykh's mirror. The shaykh was already a full moon from the first day; it is the murīd who went through changes but was attributing them to the shaykh. As his rectification was progressing, he began getting closer to the reality.

Nowadays, in addition to the mashā'ikh, there are many senior 'ulamā', scholars, jurists and Hadith experts. Does every person who remains in their company come out as an expert? It is observed that the majority of those who qualify under them not only possess very little capabilities, they are in fact defective in their capabilities. In fact, they possess no capabilities. We can go to the point of saying that the ignoramuses have taken the place of the 'ulamā'. Just one or two are worthy of doing some work. If this situation is witnessed in the external sciences, can it be said that it is actually the experts and the Hadith specialists who are defective? Or can it be said that

although their knowledge is accepted in its place, the defect and shortcomings are in the students in the sense that although they studied under such experts, they learnt nothing. When this is the case here, and everyone accepts that it is certainly not the fault of the 'ulamā', why is it that when it comes to the spiritual side, only the mashā'ikh are blamed? Why is it not assumed that the fault could be with the murīds, due to which they are not benefiting, and that the shaykh is an expert in his place!!

From among the prerequisites for a shaykh to be an expert, is it also a prerequisite for every murīd of his to be an expert? This is totally against the reality because it could be that the shaykh is an expert but those who frequent him are deprived of his teachings because of their own shortcomings and wrongs. Look at the most perfect of all humans – Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and his blessed era. Despite living in his era and being in his company, people like Abū Jahal and Abū Lahab remained deprived. Similar was the case with the hypocrites. We learn from this that there are certain prerequisites in order to derive benefit from a person. Prerequisites have to be fulfilled by both – the mentor and the mentee. As for the internal self, it is much more intricate. Thus, its prerequisites are also more intricate. In order to derive internal benefit, it is essential for a person to first fulfil those prerequisites and to remove whatever obstacles he has in its path. If the shaykh alone is an expert, what can he achieve? The seeker too has to be genuine and devoted. Now if a person did not learn under these personalities

according to the prerequisites laid down, how can it be the fault of the personalities?¹

The *Maktūbāt* of Khwājah Muḥammad Ma'sūm *rahimahullāh* contains the following:

The tawajjuh of a shaykh-e-kāmil is such that even if mountains of darkness and filth appear from all sides, he can repulse them from a genuine murīd and purify his internal self. This tawajjuh of a shaykh is also beneficial to a seeker when he is in a state of retraction. The shaykh can create expansion very quickly in him and open the path of progress for him.

In short, the basis for success is that companionship and tawajjuh which is accompanied by faith [in the shaykh] and complete submission. In other words, there must be love and handing over one's self completely from the seeker, and tawajjuh from the shaykh. Love alone – without the tawajjuh of a shaykh – can be a guide. In other words, it can be beneficial and can provide progress. However, tawajjuh of the shaykh alone and no love at all from the seeker cannot be of much benefit.²

The *Maktūbāt* of Khwājah Muḥammad Ma'sūm states:

I received your letter. It arrived at a most opportune time. You requested tawajjuh for yourself and your murīds. We occasionally practice tawajjuh. Allāh willing, we will practise it more. However, it is essential for you to know that the

¹ *Ta'rifāt Muṣliḥul Ummat*, vol. 1, pp. 39-41.

² *Ta'rifāt Muṣliḥul Ummat*, vol. 4, pp. 153-154.

basis for success is “spiritual bond”. It can also be expressed by the words love, conviction and submission. The stronger this bond with one’s mentor, the more the seeker will derive from the blessings of the shaykh’s internal self. The presence of pure love and spiritual bond is sufficient to draw blessings from an expert shaykh, even if there is no tawajjuh from him. Tawajjuh alone, without any love and spiritual bond, is not effective at all. For tawajjuh to be effective, there has to be a suitable recipient for it. Obviously, when tawajjuh is combined with the above-mentioned spiritual bond, it will become most splendid. In short, the basis is a strong spiritual bond and following the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*. If a person is firmly embedded in these two things, he has nothing to worry about. He will eventually succeed and he will not be deprived of the excellent qualities of the elders. But if there is a defect in either of these two, there is nothing but danger no matter how much the person may exert himself.¹

From the above text we learn that the reason why Rasūlullāh’s perfect tawajjuh on his beloved uncle, Abū Ṭālib was not effective was the latter’s refusal. His refusal was not only from the heart but from the tongue as well. The *Musnad Aḥmad*, *Bukhārī*, *Muslim* and *Nasa’ī* state: When Abū Ṭālib was on his death bed, Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* came to

¹ *Maktūbāt Khwājah Ma’sūm*, p. 102.

him. Abū Jahal and ‘Abdullāh ibn Umayyah were also present. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa ṣallam* said: “O uncle! Say *Lā Ilāha Illallāh* just once so that I will have one proof with which I could intercede on your behalf in front of Allāh *ta‘ālā*.” Abū Jahal and ‘Abdullāh ibn Umayyah said: “O Abū Tālib! Are you going to leave the religion of ‘Abd al-Muttalib?” Abū Tālib refused to say the kalimah. The last words which emanated from his tongue were: “On the religion of ‘Abd al-Muttalib.”¹

Why tawajjuh is not effective on a rejecter

The reason for tawajjuh not being effective on a rejecter is that he does not demonstrate any need. His condition reflects his claim to perfection. Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes:

The effect of tawajjuh falls on a person who considers himself in need of it and does not make any claims to his own perfection. Tawajjuh is effective on the masses but not on the elite because the latter display no need and desire for it. They claim that others are in need of them.²

Why Do Spiritual Blessings Have to be Obtained Via The Shaykh?

Question: In Sufism, the murīd is taught to meditate and to imagine Allāh’s mercy and blessings descending on the heart of his shaykh, and from there to his own heart. Is it correct to hold such a belief? Can’t these blessings of Allāh *ta‘ālā* descend directly

¹ *Sīratul Mustafā*, vol. 1, pp. 280-281.

² *Anfās-e-‘Īsā*, vol. 1, p. 49.

onto the heart of the murīd without the intermediary of the shaykh?

Answer: Khwājah Muḥammad Ma'sūm *rahimahullāh* writes in one of his letters:

O brother! The reason for turning to anyone in this world and relying on him is because he is your mentor, and you obtain physical and spiritual training from him. Now ponder carefully. In the light of:

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ

Say I seek refuge in the Sustainer of people.

The true and absolute mentor is Allāh *ta'ālā*. External and internal training is in reality connected to him. When reverting to and being humble before one's shaykh, teacher, mother and father – as per the instruction of the Sharī'at – it is done because they are mentors by the order of Allāh *ta'ālā*. Since this humbleness before them is by virtue of Allāh's order, it will be considered to be reverting and humbling to Allāh *ta'ālā*.¹

Thus, the meditation which is mentioned in the question is permissible. After all, it is – in reality – one form of reverting and turning to Allāh *ta'ālā*.

Imdād as-Sulūk states:

The heart of a shaykh is like a door which is opened from the unseen world. (whatever comes through the door is – in

¹ *Maktūbāt Khwājah Muḥammad Ma'sūm*, no. 79, p. 126.

reality – coming from the unseen). The blessings of Allāh’s help which are reaching the murīd at every moment are really reaching him through the shaykh.¹

Faqīhul Ummat Haḍrat Muftī Maḥmūd Hasan Gangohī *rahimahullāh* says:

Attaching the heart to the shaykh means to direct one’s heart to one’s shaykh, and to think to one’s self: “Allāh’s blessings are pouring onto my shaykh’s heart and coming to my heart through him.” A son receives physical things from his father. His father gives him money, clothes, food, sweets, etc. whereas in reality these things come to the father from Allāh *ta’ālā*. In the same way, spiritual things come onto the heart of the seeker from his shaykh. He can feel: “This thing is coming to me from my shaykh.” Even external [physical] things do not come to a person without a means. We do not see a fully baked bread coming to a person directly from Allāh *ta’ālā*. The same can be applied here [in the spiritual realm].²

Attaching the heart to one’s shaykh is referred to as “sarf-e-himmat” in the terminology of the Sufis. The objective of this is that in order to put an end to the various types of whisperings and thoughts which enter the heart of the murīd, the shaykh turns the murīd in a particular direction. This cannot be

¹ *Imdād as-Sulūk*, p. 133.

² *Malfūzāt Faqīhul Ummat*, vol. 6, p. 50.

acquired all at once. It is acquired gradually after several years.

It is not necessary to be present before one's shaykh to derive benefit from his heart. This blessing can reach the murīd even when he is absent. Hadratji Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says:

I wrote a letter to Hadrat Maulānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sāhib [Sahāranpūrī] stating: “My heart desires that I come and spend a few days in Hadrat's company.” Hadrat replied: “There is no need for you to come here in order to acquire something from me. Being near and being at a distance are the same. The benefit which you can derive here can be derived while you are seated there.”¹

As for your question: “Can't these blessings of Allāh *ta'ālā* descend directly onto the heart of the murīd without the intermediary of the shaykh?”, the answer to it is that these blessings certainly can. Allāh *ta'ālā* has the power to do that, but He linked this world to causes. The intermediary of the shaykh holds the position of a cause. This objection of yours can be applied to teaching, tutoring and all other matters. A student acquires knowledge from a teacher. Can he not acquire knowledge without a teacher? Our Tablighī brothers give their time for their own rectification. They go from village to village with their luggage on their shoulders. Can rectification not be achieved by sitting in their houses and without bearing these difficulties? The same can be applied to everything else.

¹ *Malfūzāt Faqīhul Ummat*, vol. 7, p. 63.

The Prohibition of Bay'at to Several Shaykhs

Question: Bearing in mind that all the mashā'ikh and mentors are the close servants of Allāh *ta'ālā*, what type of principle is this that when a person has pledged bay'at to one shaykh, he cannot pledge to another for as long as the first one is living, or else he will suffer loss? Please clarify what loss he will suffer?

Answer: We are astonished at your words “what type of principle is this?” You do not raise such an objection when it comes to physical doctors, how, then, can you ask with regard to spiritual doctors: “what type of principle is this?”?

All doctors and physicians have this principle that in the course of physical treatment, a patient's cure is dependent on acting on the directives of one single doctor or physician. To go to another doctor for treatment while under the treatment of one doctor is synonymous to casting one's self in the valley of death. This principle is applied although all doctors and physicians are qualified in their respective fields. The same applies to the spiritual doctor (the shaykh). A person is deriving benefit from one shaykh and his rectification is being realized, yet he – unnecessarily – pledges bay'at to another shaykh, this would cause ill-feeling from the first shaykh.

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muḥaddith Dehlawī rahimahullāh writes:

فاعلم أن تكرار البيعة...من الشخصين، فإن كان بظهور خلل في من بايعه فلا بأس، وكذلك بعد موته أو غيبته المنقطعة، وأما بلا عذر فإنه يشبه المتلاعب ويذهب البركة، ويصرف قلوب الشيوخ عن تعهده.

Know that repeating the bay'at from two shaykhs – if it is done because of the appearance of some defect in the

one to whom he had first pledged bay'at, then there is no harm in it. The same can be said if it is done after his death or disappearance. As for pledging bay'at with a second shaykh without any reason, it is similar to a person who is playing around. It removes blessings and causes the hearts of the shaykhs to turn away from his [murīd's] education and training.¹

Imdād al-Fatāwā states:

Question: A person has pledged bay'at to a shaykh who is a follower of the Sunnat. How is it for him to pledge bay'at to another shaykh while the former is still alive?

Answer: Although it is not a sin, it results in absence of blessings and sometimes causes ill-feeling with the first shaykh. This ill-feeling may well be the cause of conveying the person towards sin through causes which are within his control, although it is not necessarily the case. Nevertheless, it is a dangerous situation.

ونظير نفي المعصية وإثبات الأذية وإفضاءها إلى بعض المضار الدينية أحيانا، رواه مسلم في قصة خطبة علي رضي الله عنه بنت أبي جهل على فاطمة رضي الله عنها من قول عليه السلام: إني لست أحرم حلالا ولا أحل حراما. وقول عليه السلام: إلا أن يحب ابن أبي طالب أن يطلق ابنتي وينكح ابنتهم، فإنما ابنتي بضعة مني يريبنني ما رابها، ويؤذيني ما أذاها. (باب مناقب فاطمة).

The following is an example of where, although it is not a sin, it is harmful and could sometimes lead to Dīnī harms. Imām Muslim raḥimahullāh narrates with reference to the incident when 'Alī radiyallāhu 'anhu intended getting married to the daughter of Abū Jahal

¹ *Shifā' al-'Alīl (tarjumah al-Qaul al-Jamīl)*, p. 20.

while he was married to Fāṭimah radiyallāhu ‘anhā. Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam said in this regard: “I am not making the lawful unlawful nor vice versa.” He said further on: “Unless [‘Alī] ibn Abī Ṭālīb wants to divorce my daughter and marry his daughter. My daughter is a part of me; anything which unsettles her unsettles me as well, anything which hurts her hurts me also.”

The following is stated in Hadrat Thānwī’s famous book, *Shari‘at Aur Tariqat*:

If a person remains for a considerable period of time in the service of a shaykh while having good faith in him, but finds no effect in his companionship, then he must look elsewhere for his objective. This is because Allāh *ta‘ālā* is the objective and not the shaykh. However, he must not have any bad thoughts about the first shaykh. He may be an expert but the person’s wellbeing was not destined at his hands. In the same way, if a person’s shaykh passes away before the former can realize his objective or there is no hope of meeting him, the person must look for someone else. He must not think that it is enough to acquire blessings from the shaykh’s grave and there is no need for a new shaykh. This is because the blessings of training and education cannot be acquired from the grave. However, a person of affinity makes progress in his spiritual conditions. So this person is still in need of tutoring. Had this not been the case, there was no need for him to pledge bay‘at to anyone in the first place. There

are thousands and thousands of graves of not only the Auliya' but of the Prophets as well. It is extremely bad to pledge bay'at to several people. The blessing of bay'at is lost, the shaykh's heart becomes turbid towards the person, and there is the fear of being cut off from affinity.¹

Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* writes:

If a person is a murīd of a certain shaykh and he learns that the shaykh is a bid'atī and not worthy of bay'at, it is wājib on him to cancel his bay'at with such a shaykh. If he does not cancel it, he will be sinning. A Hadīth states:

المرء مع من أحب

A person shall be with the one whom he loves.

Thus, if a person loves a bid'atī, he will be included with him. and it is ḥarām to have love for a bid'atī. If a shaykh is worthy of bay'at but the murīd is not benefiting from him, it is permissible for him to pledge bay'at to another shaykh. However, he must still have good thoughts about his first shaykh. If a person is benefiting from his shaykh but still cancels it and becomes a murīd of another shaykh, he is also committing a sin. A shaykh/murīd relationship is one of friendship. A person can befriend anyone in Dīn, there is no sin

¹ *Sharī'at Aur Tarīqat*, pp. 490-491.

in it. However, it is not good to leave a good shaykh who is observant of the Sunnat. The Sufis do not pay attention to a murīd of this type. Thus, he will not benefit. Nonetheless, it is not a sin. All this is noted by the Sufis in their books.¹

You asked: “What loss will he suffer?” The reply to it is that it is a cause of the shaykh’s ill-feeling. Ill-feeling of the shaykh is a major loss in the path of sulūk. The one who hurts his shaykh remains deprived. O Allāh! Protect us from it.

Shaykh al-Hadīth Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes in one of his letters to Shāh Muʿīn ad-Dīn Aḥmad Nadwī *rahimahullāh*.

My second advice to your respected self is that you must not hasten in pledging bayʿat to anyone. You must first establish a good rapport with the person, then once you are inclined to him, you may do as advised. The reason for saying this is that after pledging bayʿat, if you experience some reservation about him or the shaykh’s heart has some hesitance towards you, then this is an obstacle to progress.²

He writes at another place:

According to the Sufi masters, objections against the shaykh and moving away from him can sometimes be worse than a major

¹ *Taʿlīfāt Rashīdiyyah*, p. 203.

² *Tarbīyatūs Sālikīn*, p. 250.

sin as regards the harm that this causes. Although strictly speaking it is not a sin, it becomes worse than a sin when it comes to benefiting from the shaykh. That is all. Muḥammad Zakariyyā.¹

The Exertions of The Sufis Do Not Entail Monasticism

Question: The Ahlullāh and Sufis ask their murīds to practise strenuous exertions against the self, e.g. eating less, sleeping less and curtailing interactions with the creation. Furthermore, they ask them to engage in loud dhikr and soft dhikr with the tongue and heart in solitude. Can all this not fall within monasticism and become impermissible? If your answer is in the negative, explain the difference between the two.

Answer: From the tone of your question, it seems that you consider monasticism to be completely unlawful. This is not the case. There are details in this regard. They are explained further on.

Allāh *ta'ālā* says in Sūrah al-Hadīd:

وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ، فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَائِهَا.

Their [Christians'] forsaking of the world which they innovated. We did not prescribe it on them. [They invented it] in order to seek the pleasure of Allāh. But they did not observe it as they ought to have observed it.²

¹ *Tarbīyyatus Sālikīn*, p. 570.

² Sūrah al-Hadīd, 57: 27.

An explanation of rahbānīyyah

In his explanation to the above verse, Hadrat Mufti Muḥammad Shafi' Sāhib *rahīmahullāh* writes:

The word *rahbānīyyah* is attributed to *ruhbān*. The words *rāhib* and *ruhbān* mean: a person who fears. When sin and iniquity became common after Hadrat 'Īsā *'alayhis salām*, and especially when the kings and rulers began rebelling openly against the injunctions of the Injīl, the scholars and righteous began stopping them, so they were killed. Those who survived realized that they do not have the strength to stop the evils and to combat these rulers. They felt that if they continued living and interacting with them, their religion will be destroyed. This is why they imposed on themselves to cast aside all worldly pleasures and comforts. They will not marry, they will not bother about accumulating foods and drinks, they will not pay too much of attention to housing for themselves. They will either spend their lives in far away jungles and mountains or devote themselves to travelling like nomads for the rest of their lives. They felt that by doing this, they will be able to practise on the injunctions of their religion freely. This action of theirs stemmed from the fear of Allāh *ta'ālā*, this is why they began to be referred to as *rāhib* and *ruhbān*, and their way of life is referred to as *rahbānīyyah*.

They adopted this system because of the compelling circumstances and for the sake of safeguarding their religion. Thus, what they did was not fundamentally wrong. However, when a person imposes something on himself for Allāh's sake, and then displays shortcomings with regard to it or acts against it, then it is a major sin. For example, the injunction when taking a vow. It is not essential and obligatory on a person. Once a person takes a vow and makes

something harām or wājib on himself, then it becomes wājib on him to fulfil it, and acting to the contrary becomes sinful. However, some of these people adopted the name of *rahbānīyyah* and made it a means for acquiring of this world and for living a life of luxury and comfort. The reason is that the masses began having faith and confidence in these *rāhibs*, and began presenting them with gifts and offerings. When people began reverting to them, immorality began spreading.

In the present verse of the Qur'ān Allāh *ta'ālā* speaks out against this action of theirs. They imposed abstention from pleasures on themselves – something which was not imposed on them by Allāh *ta'ālā*. Now that they imposed it on themselves, they were supposed to uphold it, but then they acted to the contrary.

The way of these people was not originally blameworthy. The Hadīth of Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd *radīyallāhu 'anhu* bears testimony to this. Ibn Kathīr *rahīmahullāh* quotes a lengthy narration via Ibn Abī Hātīm and Ibn Jarīr in which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: The Banū Isrā'īl were divided into 72 sects. Only three of them were saved from punishment. They were the ones who stopped the tyrant kings and rulers after Hadrat 'Īsā *'alayhis salām* from their tyranny, and the flagrant sinners and immoral persons from their sinning and immorality. They raised the voice of the truth in combating them and called them towards the religion of Hadrat 'Īsā *'alayhis salām*. The first of these groups combated them physically but they were overpowered and killed. A second group came in their place. They did not have so much of power but they invited them towards the truth without bothering about the safety

of their lives. They were also killed. Some of them were cut with saws while others were burnt alive, yet they bore all these torments for Allāh's pleasure. They were also successful. A third group took their place who neither had the strength to combat them nor the ability to live among them while practising on their religion. They took to the mountains and jungles and became *rāhibs*. They are the ones whom Allāh *ta'ālā* refers to in this verse:

وَرَهْبَانِيَّةٍ ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ

Their [Christians'] forsaking of the world which they innovated. We did not prescribe it on them.

We learn from this Hadīth that the original people who adopted monasticism from the Banū Isrā'īl, upheld the demands of monasticism, and remained patient over calamities are also among those who are successful.

The essence of this explanation of the above verse is that the monasticism which had been initially adopted by certain people was not blameworthy and evil in itself. In fact, it was not even an injunction of the Shari'at. Those people had voluntarily and happily imposed it on themselves. Its blameworthiness and evil commenced when some of those who imposed it on themselves could not uphold it. Bearing in mind that the majority of people had become like this, the ruling was applied to all based on the principle that when the majority do something, the ruling is applied on all. Based on this principle, the Qur'ān made reference to this with respect to the Banī Isrā'īl in general by saying that they imposed monasticism on themselves but did not uphold it and did not fulfil its conditions. This is referred to by the words:

فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا

They did not observe it as they ought to have observed it.

Another point which is learnt here is that the monasticism which the Qur'ān refers to as: "They invented it" contains the word *ibtidā'* which is derived from *bid'at*. Here it is used in its literary meaning of "inventing". It is not the definitional *bid'at* of the Sharī'at regarding which a Hadīth states:

كل بدعة ضلالة

Every bid'ah is deviation.

This point becomes completely clear when one ponders over the style and arrangement of the Qur'ān. First observe the following statement:

وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً

Allāh *ta'ālā* demonstrates His favour by saying: We placed compassion, mercy and forsaking of this world. The tone and sequence tells us that just as compassion and mercy are not blameworthy, their self-chosen monasticism was not blameworthy in itself. This is why those who considered monasticism to be unilaterally blameworthy, had to resort to unnecessary explanations to explain the conjunctions in this verse. They said that monasticism is not joined to compassion and mercy, it is a separate sentence on its own with the words *ابتدعوا* (they innovated) being concealed. However, the above explanation does not require any further justifications. Even further on, the Qur'ān neither refutes nor castigates them for their monasticism. Rather, it castigates them for not upholding the monasticism which they had chosen for

themselves, and for not fulfilling its rights and prerequisites. This too will only apply when the word ابتداء (to innovate) is taken in its literal meaning. Had the Shar'ī meaning been taken, the Qur'ān would have certainly castigated them for it because the Shar'ī definition of bid'at is a deviation in itself. From the previously quoted Hadīth of Hadrat 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd *radiyallāhu 'anhu* that the group which opted for abstinence was enumerated from among those groups which have attained salvation. Had they been guilty of the Shar'ī bid'at, they would not be listed among those who attained salvation. Instead, they would have been listed among the deviated ones.

Is monasticism totally reprehensible and impermissible?

The fact of the matter is that the general meaning of the word *rahbānīyah* is to abstain from pleasures and even permissible things. There are several levels of this:

The first level: One is to consider a lawful thing to be unlawful either by believing it to be so or in practice. This constitutes distortion and alteration of Dīn. When taking this meaning into consideration, *rahbānīyah* is absolutely haram. The following and other similar verses expound on the impermissibility of this action:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْرِمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ

*O believers! Do not declare as unlawful the good things which Allāh made lawful to you.*¹

The very nature of the words “do not consider impermissible” demonstrates that this prohibition is

¹ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5: 87.

because the person is considering Allāh's lawful thing to be unlawful either in his belief or in practice. This is synonymous to altering and distorting the injunctions of Allāh *ta'ālā*.

The second level: is that the person does not consider a permissible action to be unlawful neither in his belief nor in practice. However, he imposes on himself to abstain from it out of some worldly or religious necessity. An example of a worldly necessity could be abstaining from certain lawful foods due to illness. An example of a religious necessity is when a person feels that if he does a certain permissible action, it could eventually lead him to sin. For example, he abstains from intermingling with people out of fear that he may get caught up in speaking lies, backbiting and so on. Or he abstains from certain permissible things for a few days as a form of treatment for an evil of the self. He strictly abstains from it as a treatment until the evil is removed. For example, the Sufis emphasise on a novice to eat less, sleep less and to reduce his intermingling with people. This is a form of treatment to bring the self into balance. Once he can control his self to the extent that there is no danger of falling into sin, he is asked to give up this abstention. In reality this is not *rahbānīyah* but *taqwā* which is required by our Dīn and is established from the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum*, Tābi'ūn and Imāms of Dīn.

The third level: The person does not consider a permissible act to be harām, but he abstains from utilizing it in the manner established from the Sunnat, considering this abstention of his to be meritorious and superior. This is known as extremism which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam prohibited in many Ahādīth. A Hadīth states:

There is no monasticism in Islam.

It refers to abstaining from permissible things while considering the abstention to be superior and meritorious. If the *rahbānīyyah* which initially started among the Banī Isrā'īl was out of necessity to protect Dīn, then it falls under the second level, viz. *taqwā*. However, extremism in religion was very common among the People of the Book. When they reached the first level of making the lawful unlawful, they became guilty of committing *ḥarām*. If they remained on the third level, they were still guilty of committing a blameworthy act.¹

While extracting the issues of *sulūk* from the above-quoted verse, Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes:

They were not reprimanded for the *rahbānīyyah* which they had adopted for Allāh's pleasure. Rather, they were reprimanded for not adhering to it.²

Spiritual exertions differ from era to era

The following is stated in *Majālis Ḥakīmūl Ummat*:

The different forms of exertions such as remaining awake at night, eating less, speaking less and so on are well known among the Sufis. These exertions are neither injunctions of the Sharī'at nor are they the objectives. The objective of these exertions is to put the self through such exercises whereby it does not become

¹ *Ma'ārif al-Qur'ān*, vol. 8, pp. 326-329.

² *Bayān al-Qur'ān*, 11/110.

uncontrollable; it must remain within the limits of the Sharī'at. This is why it is the obligatory duty of a shaykh, rectifier and mentor to first observe and gauge the strength, availability and temperament of the seeker and then prescribe exertions which are suited to him. The severe exertions which were prescribed by the mashā'ikh of the past were appropriate to those times because the temperaments in those days were strong and firm. It was difficult to bring the self onto balance without severe exertions.

Hadrat added:

Nowadays the temperaments are weak and capabilities are generally fragile. Previously what used to be achieved through 40-days' exertions is now automatically acquired because of natural weaknesses. This is why in today's times, the seeker should not be asked to eat less and sleep less. This will have detrimental health effects which would render the person incapable of doing anything.

Hadrat said:

It is well-known among the physicians that the medications which could be consumed by one person in the past cannot be consumed by even four people today. Nowadays, about a quarter of the original prescription is prescribed for a patient. The same is with the exertions of the Sufis. They are actually medications and not foods. The seeker must be made to consume according to the needs of his

temperament and disposition. In short, exertions are not objectives; they are the path to the objective and its means. One must distinguish between the path and the objective.¹

Exertions are intended to bring about a balance

Hadrat Muftī Muḥammad Taqī Sāhib ‘Uthmānī *dāmat barakātuhum* says:

The Sufis sometimes prohibit [a murīd] from permissible things for a certain period of time so that the self is accustomed to exertion. Someone asked Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ya‘qūb Sāhib Nānautwī *rahīmahullāh*: “Hadrat! These Sufis prohibit many things which Allāh *ta‘ālā* made lawful. Why do they make them unlawful? For example, Allāh *ta‘ālā* made food lawful, the Sufis say do not eat. Allāh *ta‘ālā* made sleep lawful, the Sufis say do not sleep. Allāh *ta‘ālā* made conversing and interacting with people lawful, the Sufis say reduce your conversations and interactions with people. What is the reason for this?”

Hadrat Nānautwī *rahīmahullāh* took a piece of paper and said: “Turn this piece of paper on one side.” He then said: “Now straighten it. Despite straightening it several times, it does not become straight. The indentation which has become embedded in it is turning the paper in that direction. The way of straightening it is to turn it from the underside in the opposite direction. The paper will now become straight.”

Hadrat then added: “Man’s self is also turned towards sin. It will not come onto a balance if you want it to. This is why you will have to turn it in the opposite

¹ *Majālis Ḥakīmūl Ummat*, pp. 167-168.

direction. You must also keep it away from permissible and lawful things. When you do this, it will certainly develop a balance and you will be protected against sin and Allāh's disobedience.¹

To sum up, the *rahbāniyyah* which the Qur'ān spoke out against is related to beliefs or action. On the other hand, the reduction of pleasures and abstaining from permissible things which the Sufis prescribe is related to forms of treatment. This is permissible.

Proof for reduction of pleasures

Observe the following proof for the reduction of pleasures:

عن جابر رضي الله عنه قال: أدركني عمر رضي الله عنه وفيه قال: أو كلما اشتهيت شيئاً اشتريته؟ حسب أحدكم من السرف أن يأكل كل ما اشتهى. (أخرجه مالك)

Jābir raḍiyallāhu 'anhu narrates: *Ḥaḍrat 'Umar raḍiyallāhu 'anhu* met me...He said: "Do you buy everything which you desire!? It is sufficient for a person to be labelled extravagant when he eats whatever he desires."

Almost all the Sufi orders pay special attention to reduction of pleasures. The present *Ḥaḍīth* makes reference to this and it is one department of exertion.²

A few exertions attributed to the Auliya'

Ta'rifāt-e-Rashīdiyyah contains the following:

Question: We hear about the conditions of certain Sufis and elders of Dīn – and Allāh *ta'ālā* knows best – that they impose difficult hardships on their selves. For example, to wear sacks and chains, to castrate

¹ *Islāhī Majālis*, pp. 63-64.

² *At-Takashshuf*, p. 381.

themselves, to go out into the jungles, to fall into difficulty, to abstain from marriage, to abstain from clothing, to abstain from good foods such as meat, and so on. It is as though they are making harām on their selves things which are Sunnat, desirable or permissible in the Sharī‘at; and imposing difficulties on themselves which is in itself impermissible because Allāh *ta‘ālā* says:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

Allāh does not impose on a self except what it can bear.

إن الدين يسر

Dīn is most certainly easy.

However, this *rahbānīyyah* was found in the Jews and Christians, and Allāh *ta‘ālā* castigated them for it:

وَرَهْبَانِيَّةٍ ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ

Their [Christians’] forsaking of the world which they innovated. We did not prescribe it on them.

Furthermore, a Hadīth of Abū Dāwūd Sharīf states:

لا تشددوا على أنفسكم فيشدد الله عليكم، فإن قوما شددوا على أنفسهم فشدد الله عليهم، فتلك بقاياهم في الصوامع والديار

Do not impose difficulties on yourselves or else Allāh ta‘ālā will make it difficult on you. People [of the past] imposed difficulties on their selves and Allāh ta‘ālā made it difficult on them. Now you see remnants of them in the monasteries and dwellings.

Bearing in mind that the verse:

وَرَهْبَانِيَّةٍ ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ

Their [Christians] forsaking of the world which they innovated. We did not prescribe it on them.

Considers such actions to be bid'at and impermissible, they will not be a source of perfection for them but a cause of their downfall. I heard about a certain person who remained suspended in a well for 12 years; another remained for six months in a river in winter, and for six months in the hot sun in summer. I do not understand how they did these things? How did they perform their ṣalāh and carry out other necessities of Dīn and life while in this condition!? These conditions and incidents are related to us by our seniors in Dīn. What can be said of the ignorant masses with regard to the Sufis! Therefore, leading a life of a dervish can only be found in following the Sunnat and the Sharī'at. It can never be in anything which is against it. No matter what level of perfection a person may reach, it cannot be considered. Furthermore, these things are against the Sunnat and the ways of the Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum. How, then, can they be accepted as perfection? Should these things be attributed to the Sufis and accepted as perfection, or should they be rejected after believing them to be against the Qur'ān and Hadīth?

Answer: The exertions performed by the pious elders are not such that they can be castigated for on the basis of the Sharī'at because Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ

*Strive for the sake of Allāh with the striving that is due to Him.*¹

¹ Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 78.

Striving against the self and Shaytān is in itself a major jihād which is established from the texts. The elders abstained from pleasures, permissible clothing, comforts and so on for the sake of culturing the self. They did it so that the self may desist from its demands for disobedience, and their *nafs-e-ammārah*¹ may become a *nafs-e-muṭma'innah*². Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* himself sometimes kept away from desirable things and so did the *Ṣahābah raḍiyallāhu 'anhum*. They did not consume delicacies while acting under the instruction:

أَذْهَبْتُمْ طَيِّبَاتِكُمْ فِي حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا

*You wasted all your pleasures in the worldly life.*³

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* expressed his displeasure when he saw *Hadrat Fāṭimah raḍiyallāhu 'anhā* beautifying her house. In this way, he indirectly affirmed that it is permissible to abstain from lawful things if it is done for the sake of culturing the self. Rasūlullāh's poverty was by choice; not out of compulsion. The permissibility of abstaining from lawful things is proven from this. The pious elders abstained from lawful things but did not make them *harām* upon their selves. If a sick person does not eat a certain item because of his illness and abstains from it for his entire life due to his illness, the *Sharī'at* does not castigate him in anyway for it, nor is he a sinner. In the same way, the pious elders abstained from pleasures for the sake of internal treatment and evil characteristics of the self, not because they considered

¹ The self which instructs a person towards evil.

² The self which is content with the injunctions of Allāh *ta'ālā*.

³ *Sūrah al-Aḥqāf*, 46: 20.

these pleasures to be harām. The acts of castrating themselves, remaining in a river for six months while abstaining from ṣalāh and so on were never performed by the pious elders. Some foolish fellow accused the pious elders of doing such things.

Yes, if someone suspended himself in a well or fell into a river for the sake of punishing his self, he did it after performing his ṣalāh and other obligations in the best manner. All exertions were carried out for the rectification and perfection of ṣalāh, fasting and so on. How could they abandon these obligations?! This is a false accusation. Most of those who abstained from marriage did it after having full confidence in their carnal desires – that they will not fall into sin. They abstained from marriage so that they may be free of worries in their acts of worship. Furthermore, in their desire to abstain from unlawful wealth, they felt it would be difficult for them to provide lawful sustenance to a wife, while they were content with eating lawful grass. Abstaining from marriage for these reasons is not blameworthy. In fact, there are times when it becomes obligatory to abstain from marriage.

Thus, in the light of the Shari'at this criticism is totally based on misunderstanding and ignorance as regards the principles of Dīn. Nonetheless, the exertions of the Sufis are inferred from the texts. They used to acquire spiritual strength, and culturing of character and of the self through these exertions. It was therefore an act of worship in respect to them, and there is no sin or castigation for abstaining from something which is permissible. Yes, it is a bid'at to consider a lawful thing to be unlawful and amounts to conflict [with the Shari'at]. The Sufis never committed this sin – they abstained from lawful things as a form

of treatment for the self. The actions of these elders were thus acts of perfection and in total conformity with the injunctions of the Shari'at.¹

The Benefit of Tabligh Extends to Others While That of Sulūk is Confined to The Person

Question: If engaging in the work of Da'wat Wa Tabligh after remaining for some time in the Markaz at Nizāmuddīn and traversing the path of sulūk after spending time in the Khānqāh are both considered to be permissible in the Shari'at and both are understood to be the objectives; even then, the work of Da'wat Wa Tabligh seems to be better because its benefit is to one's self and extends to others as well. On the other hand, taṣawwuf and sulūk are of benefit to the seeker and murīd alone. Thus, what harm could there be if the people of Da'wat Wa Tabligh confine themselves solely and exclusively to the work of Da'wat Wa Tabligh and remain totally aloof from the Khānqāh and Khānqāh activities? Why can they not be independent of the Khānqāh?

Answer: You said: "Thus, what harm could there be if the people of Da'wat Wa Tabligh confine themselves solely and exclusively to the work of Da'wat Wa Tabligh and remain totally aloof from the Khānqāh and Khānqāh activities? Why can they not be considered independent of the Khānqāh?" This group is already independent of the Khānqāh, what need is there to make it independent of the Khānqāh? Your tone in every question of this questionnaire can be considered to be independent. From the present quotation it appears that this point has become embedded in your heart and mind that there is such

¹ *Ta'rifāt-e-Rashīdiyyah*, pp. 194-196.

opposition and dichotomy between the Tablighī work and the Khānqāh system that it is impossible for the two to be combined. In other words, a Tablighī can never become a Sufi, and a Sufi can never become a muballigh. Whereas the reality is not like this. Rather, there is a strong bond between the two as was explained at the beginning from the lives of the elders of Tabligh.

A person cannot be a muballigh in the true sense of the word without ensuring his rectification. Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes:

As long as a person's affinity with Allāh *ta'ālā* is not firmly embedded, unnecessary relations with the creation are extremely detrimental. Even the benefit which is imagined, i.e. one is fulfilling the rights of the creation, that can only be realized when affinity with the Creator is firm. If this is not realized, neither will the right of the creation be fulfilled nor of the Creator. This has been experienced not by just one person but by thousands of men of insight. This is why people who were far more qualified than yourself and myself severed relations of this nature.¹

Your statement: “the work of Da'wat Wa Tabligh seems to be better because its benefit is to one's self and extends to others as well. On the other hand, *taṣawwuf* and *sulūk* are of benefit to the seeker and *murīd* alone” appears to be valuable but when it is evaluated deeply then the muballigh who – without ensuring his own rectification – worries about the

¹ *Anfās-e-'Īsā*, vol. 2, p. 479.

benefit of others by enjoining good, then there can be no guarantee as to when he will fall into tribulation. This is because enjoining good is not the work of every Tom, Dick and Harry.

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* says:

The shaykh only gives permission to the murīd to extend his benefit to others when he observes the capabilities of administration and supervision in him. The reason for this is that there are certain etiquette for enjoining good which every person does not possess and without which, enjoining good will be more detrimental than beneficial.¹

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Waṣīyyullāh Sāhib Allāhābādī *rahimahullāh* says:

Someone asked Hadrat (Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad) Gangohī *rahimahullāh*: “Hadrat, can blessings be derived from a grave?” Hadrat asked: “Who is the one who wants to derive the benefit?” The person said: “Take me for an example.” Hadrat replied: “No.” Our Hadrat (i.e. Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*) said: “Had the person said: ‘Take you as an example’, Hadrat [Gangohī] would have said: ‘Yes.’ Similarly, people ask me: ‘If a person is occupied in Tabligh, will people benefit or not?’ I (Hadrat Maulānā Waṣīyyullāh) ask: ‘Who is the one who is doing the Tabligh?’ If the person is an ordinary layman and he says: ‘Me for example’, I say: ‘There will be no

¹ *Anfās-e-‘Īsā*, vol. 1, pp. 58-59.

benefit.’ If he takes the name of an erudite scholar, I say: ‘Yes, there will be benefit from his Tabligh.’”¹

A sign of sincerity

Ahsan al-Fatawā contains an article of Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Rashīd Aḥmad Sāhib Ludhyānwī rahimahullāh which is titled: *Tabligh Kī Shar‘ī Haythiyat Wa Hudūd* (the legal status of Tabligh and its limits). While discussing the issue of the signs of sincerity, he writes:

If a person is conveying Dīn to others while his fundamental disposition and nature is that he is restless to be in solitude with Allāh’s remembrance – neither does his heart want to meet anyone nor does he want to speak to anyone – and he finds it a burden to make Tabligh but does it because it is the order of Allāh *ta’ālā*, then this is a sign that his Tabligh and Dīnī services are accepted in Allāh’s sight.

If he is discomfited by sitting in solitude, constantly wants to make Tabligh and is always desirous of delivering talks to people, then it is a sign that his Dīnī services are not accepted. This is because he is not rendering these services for Allāh *ta’ālā*. He is going against Allāh’s orders and doing them for the sake of his self [and ego].

Rasūlullāh’s fundamental temperament and disposition was:

¹ *Majmū’ah Ta’lifāt Musliḥul Ummat*, vol. 5, p. 36.

حُبِّبَ إِلَيْهِ الْخَلَاءُ

Allāh ta'ālā made solitude beloved to him.

He found it naturally burdensome to sit among people for the sake of Tablīgh. This is why Allāh ta'ālā addressed him thus:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْعَدْوَةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ
وَجْهَهُ

Keep yourself with those who invoke their Sustainer morning and evening, seeking His countenance.¹

In other words, we know that you find it heavy to remain with people this is why you are ordered to impose on your disposition and be with them for the sake of Tablīgh.

The heart is constantly restless to see the Beloved, but it is His order to convey His words to others. This is why the true lover obliterates his desire in carrying out the order of the Beloved.

أريد وصاله ويريد هجري - فأترك ما أريد لما يريد

I want to connect myself to the Beloved but He wants me to be separated, so I sacrifice my desire for the desire of the Beloved.²

Now you yourself can decide in the light of the above statements of the elders. What is the reality of the self-

¹ Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 28.

² *Aḥsan al-Fatāwā*, vol. 9, pp. 140-141.

benefits and extended-benefits which you assumed!? Just imagine the benefits which the ummat is being deprived of on account of not understanding this reality! Our complaint is to Allāh *ta'ālā* alone.

The Four Spiritual Lineages of Sufism

Question: Tasawwuf has four spiritual lineages: (1) Chishtīyyah, (2) Naqshbandīyyah, (3) Qādirīyyah and (4) Suhrawardīyyah. Do their spiritual chains reach directly to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*? Or do they stop at some other point? What is the starting point of these four lineages? Kindly clarify. Also explain the distinguishing traits and benefits of each of these four.

Answer: Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes:

All the Sufi lineages reach Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* via the Ahl al-Bayt. One lineage of the Naqshbandīyyah has Hadrat Imām Ja'far Sādiq, while another has Hadrat 'Alī *radiyallāhu 'anhu*, Hadrat Imām Husayn *radiyallāhu 'anhu*, Hadrat Imām Zayn al-'Ābidīn *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Imām Muhammad Bāqir *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Imām Ja'far Sādiq *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Imām Mūsā Kāzim *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Imām 'Alī ibn Mūsā *rahimahullāh*. The Qādirīyyah lineage has Hadrat Imām Hasan *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Hasan Muthannā *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Sayyid 'Abdullāh Mahd *rahimahullāh*. The Chishtīyyah lineage has Hadrat 'Alī *radiyallāhu 'anhu*. The Suhrawardīyyah lineage has Hadrat Imām 'Alī Mūsā Ridā *rahimahullāh*. Thus,

we see that all these lineages are of the Ahl al-Bayt.

فَهَذِهِ السَّلَاسِلُ كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ تُؤْتِي
أُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا.

These spiritual chains are like a good tree whose root is firmly established and whose branches are in the sky. It produces its fruit in every season by the order of its Sustainer.¹

A ghayr muqallid said to Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh: “The categorization of the Sufi families into four, the Chishtīyyah, Naqshbandīyyah and so on appears to be against the Sunnat.” Hadrat rahimahullāh replied: “First of all this distribution is not a Shar‘ī categorization, it is merely definitional. Thus, it is not a bid‘at. Secondly, no one considers it to be essential. You have full rights not to align yourself to any of them.”²

The answer which you wanted has been provided from the above two quotations from Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh. Firstly, these four Sufi lineages go up to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam. Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Muhājir Makkī rahimahullāh has recorded the names of the mashā’ikh of all four lineages in his well-known work, Diyā’ al-Qulūb.³ For the sake of brevity we are not quoting them here.

The second point is that this categorization is not a Shar‘ī one. It is therefore inappropriate to fall into

¹ *Imdād al-Fatāwā*, vol. 6, pp. 138-139.

² *Majālis Hakīmul Ummat*, p. 327.

³ Urdu, pp. 62-64; Persian, pp. 64-68.

discussions about it. The objective of all four is the same, viz. to establish a bond with Allāh *ta'ālā*. This is similar to a person acquiring proficiency in (1) Unani medicine, (2) homoeopathy, (3) allopathic medicine, and (4) Vedic medicine; and received a degree for treatment in all four branches. He then treats his patients based on their illnesses, temperaments, season-considerations and opts for whichever of the four he feels will be most beneficial to them. Despite the many differences among these medical branches, the objective of all is the same, i.e. to obtain a cure.¹

In your question you asked: “Also explain the distinguishing traits and benefits of each of these four.” The actual answer to it is related to practice. In other words, it is difficult to understand the distinguishing trait without being attached to the spiritual family. Nevertheless, in order to make it easier to understand, we quote an extract from the autobiography – *Āp Betī* – of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib rahimahullāh:

In his *al-Badā'i*' (p. 230), Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh has written a detailed explanation on the difference in training procedures between the Chishtī and Naqshbandī masters. He writes: “The mashā'ikh first concentrate on connecting the murīd to Allāh *ta'ālā*. This results in a gradual severing of bonds from all apart from Allāh *ta'ālā*. Others give preference to separation [from all apart from Allāh *ta'ālā*]. The effect of this is that the more the separation from them, the more the bond with Allāh *ta'ālā* increases. After all,

¹ *Fatāwā Maḥmūdīyyah*, vol. 4, p. 372.

there are only two bonds – if one increases, the other will decrease; and vice versa. The differences in these approaches are similar to those which exist among the physicians. When the patient has to be taken towards good health and strength, they either adopt ways of removing the ailment or strengthening the system. The Unani physicians give preference to removing the ailment.¹

The Reality of Kashf

Question: The Sufis experience kashf quite often. Define kashf and clarify whether Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* experienced kashf or not? If any of the *Sahābah radiyallāhu ‘anhum* had kashf, give a few examples or at least provide references.

Answer: Kashf refers to incidents which occur in the world of similes and are concealed from normal eyes.²

Kashf is not a sign of human excellence; it is experienced by flagrant sinners, immoral persons, unbelievers and even animals. Allāh *ta‘ālā* says:

لَقَدْ كُنْتَ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ.

*You remained heedless of this day. Now We removed from you your darkness so your sight is sharp today.*³

In his commentary to the above verse, *Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh* writes under *Masā’il as-Sulūk*:

¹ *Āp Betī*, vol. 2, p. 1122.

² *Majālis Ḥakīmūl Ummat*, p. 217.

³ *Sūrah Qāf*, 50: 22.

We learn from this that even the unbelievers can acquire kashf without striving for it. Thus, a believer should not desire such things.¹

Those on falsehood also experience kashf

The following is a narration from Hadrat Abū Saʿīd Khudrī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*:

عن أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه قال: لقيه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وأبو بكر وعمر يعني ابن صياد في بضع طرق المدينة، فقال له رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: أئتشهد أني رسول الله؟ فقال هو: أئتشهد أني رسول الله؟ فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: امنت بالله وملائكته وكتبه ورسله، ماذا ترى؟ قال: أرى عرشا على الماء، فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: ترى عرش إبليس على البحر، قال: وما ترى؟ قال أرى صادقين وكاذبا أو كاذبين وصادقا، فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: لبس عليه، فدعوه. (مشكوة، قصة ابن صياد، ص: ٤٧٨)

Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, Abū Bakr and ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhumā met Ibn Sayyād on one of the roads of Madīnah. Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said to him: “Do you testify that I am Allāh’s Messenger?” Ibn Sayyād replied: “Do you testify that I am Allāh’s Messenger?” Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: “I believe in Allāh, His angels, His books and His Messengers. What do you see?” He replied: “I see a throne on water.” Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: “You are actually seeing the throne of Shayṭān on the ocean. What else do you see?” He replied: “I see two truthful ones (who bring true information) and one liar (who brings false information). Or, I see two liars and one truthful person.” Rasūlullāh

¹ *Bayān al-Qurʿān*, vol. 11, p. 52.

sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam (addressed the Sahābah) saying: “He is confused, leave him alone (he cannot even give correct answers).”

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes in his explanation to the above Hadīth:

It is gauged from the above Hadīth that the Ahl Bāṭil also experience kashf. We also learn that every kashf is not accepted and praiseworthy. The exposition of Shayṭān’s throne to him was mentioned in a disparaging tone. When those who consider kashf to be a sign of wilāyat or rely on every type of kashf see this Hadīth, it becomes obligatory on them to rectify themselves.¹

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes elsewhere on the above Hadīth:

We learn from this that it is possible for the Ahl Bāṭil to gain access to the celestial world and to fathom thoughts. This too is not a sign of wilāyat. People in general are deceived into thinking it is.²

Does kashf cause an increase in conviction or is it an obstacle in the path?

Hadrat Khwājah Nizām ad-Dīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* states:

Whatever is exposed by the Auliya’ is a result of their intoxication. This is because they are people of intoxication. On the other hand, the Prophets are people of

¹ *Shari‘at Wa Tariqat*, p. 521.

² *At-Takashshuf*, p. 413.

alertness. Kashf and karāmāt are obstacles on the path of a seeker. Steadfastness develops from love.¹

The writings of Makhdūm al-Mulk Shaykh Sharaf ad-Dīn Yaḥyā Munyarī *rahimahullāh* contain a treasure of rare investigations, and lofty and intricate sciences and themes . These are rarely found in the books of facts and sciences. An extract is quoted from one of his letters:

The things which are exposed to the Siddīqīn through kashf and true insight, and events which are exposed to them could well not be exposed to some people. Despite this, no objections can be made against them [those who do not experience kashf] nor can any defect be established against them. The thing which is really objectionable and a defect is moving away from the path of steadfastness. When things of this nature are exposed to the Siddīqīn, it results in an increase of their conviction, their striving increases, and there is progress in their firmness and praiseworthy characteristics. If these conditions are experienced by a person who does not adhere to the injunctions of the Shari'at, they result in his moving further away [from the path], and they become the means of his delusion and foolishness. In his deception and arrogance, he considers people to be insignificant and defeated. There are times when it leads to his leaving the fold of

¹ *Tārīkh Da'wat Wa 'Azīmat*, vol. 3, p. 132.

Islam. He rejects the limits of divine injunctions and halāl and harām. He assumes that the purpose of worship is nothing but Allāh's remembrance. He gives up following the Sunnat and succumbs to apostasy and atheism. We seek refuge in Allāh *ta'ālā* from that.¹

A few statements of Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh which were collated by Hadrat Muftī Muḥammad Shafi' Sāhib rahimahullāh are quoted below:

Kashf is experienced by non-Muslims

Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh said:

An exposition of unseen things or future events is neither a worthy excellence nor a sign of proximity to Allāh *ta'ālā*. One does not even have to be a Muslim or have an intellect for it. A non-Muslim also experiences kashf. Even a lunatic experiences correct kashf. *Sharḥ Asbāb* is a well-known book of Unani medicine. The following is written under the topic of mental ailments: "Many lunatics experience correct kashf. As for unbelievers and flagrant sinners experiencing correct kashf, there are thousands of well-known and famous incidents in this regard."

Qudratullāh experiences kashf of graves

There was a person by the name of Qudratullāh. He began experiencing kashf of graves. Most of his kashf was correct. However, he was not regular in even performing ṣalāh. He went to one grave and said: "The person in this grave is presently standing and making dhikr with a tasbīḥ made of sandalwood." On investigation, a close friend [of the one who was in the

¹ *Tārīkh Da'wat Wa 'Azīmat*, vol. 3, pp. 292-294.

grave] said: “He certainly used to have a sandalwood tasbīh which he was especially attached to.” He had said to his friend: “When I pass away, you must place this tasbīh in my grave.” The friend did as he was advised.

On another occasion, Qudratullāh began performing salāh near a certain grave. He suddenly came to attention and said: “The one who is in this grave is presently being punished. The reason is that he had a certain person’s entrusted item. When the owner asked for it he denied having it and did not return it to him.” Before this, Qudratullāh had no knowledge about the person, his name and so on. When people made inquiries, the deceased’s wife acknowledged what was claimed and said: “Qudratullāh is correct, the deceased was my husband. He had accepted an item as a trust from such and such person, and later on refused to return it.”

In short, knowledge of these unseen things is subservient to an internal physical power. It is also acquired by unbelievers, flagrant sinners and lunatics. They experience kashf and it is correct in most cases. These things have no influence whatsoever as regards piety and closeness to Allāh *ta’ālā*. Nowadays people are attracted to strange and unique incidents, and they are carried away by any person who experiences kashf. Many people go astray in this way and lead others astray. The fundamental criterion for truth and falsehood, and acceptance and rejection [in Allāh’s court] is solely and only adherence to the Sharī’at and the Sunnat. The one who does not fulfil this criterion is not a Walī and not to be followed; he is deviated and astray no matter how correct his kashf is.¹

¹ *Majālis Hakīmul Ummat*, pp. 49-50.

Knowledge and a test through kashf

Hadrat Thānwī rahimahullāh said:

Although Shaykh Akbar Muḥīy ad-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī is of the opinion that there is no error in the kashf and ilhām of the erudite Sufi masters, he still said: “Knowledge which any ummatī acquires through kashf and ilhām is not firmly established and not satisfactory. Instead, there can be complete satisfaction in the knowledge which is obtained from Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam.”

Hadrat rahimahullāh added:

Sometimes, kashf is for the sake of testing the person who is experiencing it, but there is no possibility of the knowledge of a Prophet being for the sake of a test. The reason for this is that a Prophet is solely a guide, there can be no misguidance from him. On the other hand, kashf is related to conceptual matters; and there can be guidance and misguidance in conceptual matters. Allāh *ta’ālā* is on a different level; guidance and misguidance occur through His power and will. This is why the accursed Shayṭān can make claims of divinity in a person’s dream, but he has not been given the power to claim to be a Prophet or Messenger. If this power was given to him, man could have been deceived. The possibility of such deception does not exist when making claims of divinity because even a person possessing the least amount of intelligence will gauge this falsehood.¹

(3) Knowledge of events which are to take place in the future are sometimes involuntary from Allāh *ta’ālā*, and acquired through efforts on other occasions. It is a matter which is within one’s choice.

¹ *Majālis Hakīmul Ummat*, pp. 143-144.

A person performs certain exercises and actions, and is then able to learn future events. This can be acquired by a flagrant sinner, an immoral person and even by an unbeliever.¹

(4) The essence of kashf is that events which are in the supernatural world and concealed from people in general are shown to a person and he is able to see them. When a heart is free from material things and connections, it is not far-fetched for him to experience kashf. Let alone being accepted by Allāh *ta'ālā*, a person does not even have to be a Muslim to experience it. It can be acquired by an unbeliever and flagrant sinner as well. In fact, even a lunatic and madman can acquire it. It has nothing to do with *karāmat* because *karāmat* is an Allāh-conferred gift which these people [unbelievers, sinners, etc.] do not enjoy. In fact, this same kashf is sometimes given to a person by Allāh *ta'ālā* as a *karāmat*. Such a kashf is also a *karāmat*. This is generally the case with the kashf of the *Auliya'*. The special indication of a kashf being given as a *karāmat* is this: When it is experienced, the self perceives its own humility, submission and incapability. A kashf which is not accompanied by this sign, and instead the self perceives pride and arrogance, then it is not a *karāmat*; it is an *istidrāj* from which we have to seek refuge.²

It becomes clear from the above statements that kashf is not a sign of piety and excellence, neither is it within one's control. It is therefore futile to search for it in the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and his Companions *radiyallāhu 'anhum*.

¹ *Majālis Ḥakīmūl Ummat*, p. 213.

² *Ibid.* pp. 217-218.

Furthermore, Allāh *ta'ālā* apprised Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* of many events and incidents related to the supernatural world and the Hereafter through divine revelation. It is therefore difficult to differentiate between divine revelation and kashf, and to say that such and such event was gauged through kashf, while such and such was learnt through divine revelation.

The blessed lives of the *Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum* are filled with kashf and karāmāt; it is difficult to encompass them. Study *Hayātuṣ Sahābah* of *Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Ṣāhib Kāndhlawī rahimahullāh*. Furthermore, there is a book titled *Karāmat-e-Sahābah* written by *Maulānā Sayyid Aḥmad Ḥasan Sambhalī rahimahullāh* which also contains an evaluation by *Ḥakimul Ummat Ḥaḍrat Thānwī rahimahullāh*. Study this book. It contains 118 incidents displaying the kashf and karāmāt of the *Sahābah radiyallāhu 'anhum*.

Difference in Ruling as Regards Collective Dhikr And Qur'ān Recitation

Question: If an act which is *mustaḥab* is done collectively with so much of importance attached to it that it appears to be obligatory, then does it not reach the boundary of *bid'at*? For example collective recitation of the Qur'ān and so on. Why, then, is collective loud dhikr, collective meditation and so on not *bid'at*? It seems difficult to accept that collective Qur'ān recitation is labelled a *bid'at* while collective loud dhikr and other similar practices are considered permissible under the guise of *bid'at-e-ḥasanah*. Kindly clarify the reason for this differentiation?

Answer: Collective loud dhikr and meditation are important acts of worship which are established from

the Qur'an and Hadīth. Allāh *ta'ālā* blessed Hadrat Dāwūd 'alayhis salām with a very pleasing voice. He was conferred with the miracle of the mountains joining him when he used to engage in the dhikr of Allāh *ta'ālā*. Birds used to stop and join him in the dhikr as well. Allāh *ta'ālā* says in this regard:

إِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهُ يُسَبِّحْنَ بِالْعِشِيِّ وَالْإِشْرَاقِ، وَالطَّيْرَ مَحْشُورَةً كُلٌّ لَهُ أَوَّابٌ.

*We subjugated the mountains with him, expressing [Our] purity in the evening and the morning. And [likewise] the birds in their flocks: all were turning to him.*¹

In his explanation to the above verse, Hadrat Thānawī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Masā'il as-Sulūk*:

قوله تعالى: إِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهُ يُسَبِّحْنَ بِالْعِشِيِّ... الخ: بعد ما يحمل على التسييح القالي كما هو ظاهر القرآن ومؤيد بكشف كثير من أهل الله تعالى يؤخذ منه أمران: الأول الإجتماع على الذكر تنشيطا للنفس وتقوية للهمة وتعاكس بركات الجماعة من بعض على بعض، والثاني صحة ما يتخيل في بعض الأشغال من اشتغال كل ما في العالم بالذكر، وله تأثير عجيب في جمع الهمة وقطع الخطرات.

While taking this to mean verbal glorification [of Allāh ta'ālā] as is apparent from the Qur'an and supported by the exposition of many Ahlullāh, two points can be derived from this: (1) Collective dhikr which serves to energize the self, strengthen one's courage and enables the obtaining of mutual blessings from each other. (2) The validity of certain practices wherein the dhākir pictures the entire world. This practice is quite unique

¹ Sūrah Sād, 38: 18-19.

*in gathering one's courage and removing stray thoughts.*¹

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: ما اجتمع قوم في بيت من بيوت الله تعالى يتلون كتاب الله ويتدارسونه بينهم إلا نزلت عليهم السكينة، وغشيتهم الرحمة، وحفتهم الملائكة، وذكرهم الله فيمن عنده. أخرجه أبو داؤد.

*Ḥadīrat Abū Hurayrah radiyallāhu 'anhu narrates that Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said: When people assemble in one of the Houses of Allāh to recite the Qur'ān and study it among themselves, tranquillity most certainly descends on them, mercy engulfs them, the angels surround them, and Allāh ta'ālā makes mention of them among those [angels] who are with Him.*²

The practice of dhikr in a circle: When many dhākirīn assemble in one place and engage in dhikr, it has the benefits of blessings being passed on among their hearts, increasing their enthusiasm and courage, removing laziness, and aiding in continuity. This is referred to as dhikr-e-ḥalqah. The present Ḥadīth contains the basis for this practice and makes reference to its blessings.³

Proof for loud dhikr

Ḥadīrat Thānwī rahimahullāh went into a detailed and lengthy discussion on loud dhikr. One extract is quoted here:

¹ *Bayān al-Qur'ān*, vol. 10, p. 4 (*Masā'il as-Sulūk*).

² *Abū Dāwūd*.

³ *At-Takashshuf*, p. 329.

After proving the Shar'ī validity of loud dhikr, it must be known that it is not confined to any specific method and form. Rather, due to the general nature of the proofs, the method is also all-embracing. It could be done alone, collectively, in a circle, in a row, in any other form, standing, sitting, etc. – all are permissible.

عن أبي هريرة وأبي سعيد رضي الله عنهما قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: لا يقعد قوم يذكرون إلا حفتهم الملائكة. رواه مسلم.

*Abū Hurayrah and Abū Sa'īd radiyallāhu 'anhumā narrate that Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said: When people sit down to engage in Allāh's remembrance, the angels most certainly surround them.*¹

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه أنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: يقول الله تعالى: أنا عند ظن عبدي بي، وأنا معه إذا ذكرني فإن ذكرني في نفسه ذكرته في نفسي، وإن ذكرني في ملأٍ ذكرته في ملأٍ خير منهم. متفق عليه.

*Abu Hurayrah radiyallāhu 'anhu narrates that Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said: Allāh ta'ālā says: I treat My servant according to his thoughts about Me, and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in his self, I remember him in My self. If he remembers Me in a gathering, I remember him in a gathering which is better than their gathering.*²

وعن أنس رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: لأن أقعد مع قوم يذكرون الله من صلاة العصر إلى أن تغرب الشمس أحب إلي من أعتق أربعة. رواه أبو داؤد.

¹ Narrated by Muslim.

² Narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim.

Anas radiyallāhu ‘anhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam said: Sitting with a group of people who are engaged in Allāh’s remembrance from the ‘aṣr ṣalāh until sunset is more beloved to me than freeing four slaves.¹

عن أنس رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إذا مررتم برياض الجنة فارتعوا، قالوا: ما رياض الجنة؟ قال: حلق الذكر. رواه الترمذي.

Anas radiyallāhu ‘anhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam said: “When you pass by the gardens of Paradise, you must graze [to your heart’s content].” The Ṣahābah asked: “What are the gardens of Paradise?” He replied: “The assemblies of dhikr.”²

Allāh ta‘ālā says:

قال الله تعالى: الذين يذكرون الله قياما وقعودا وعلى جنوبهم... الآية.

Those who remember Allāh while standing, sitting and on their sides...

وفي تفسير الأحمدي في بحث الجهر والإخفاء: وهذا بحث مختلف فيه بين الأنام في زماننا، ولا طائل تحته، إذ المقصود بكل الوصول إلى الله بأي طريق كان.

قال في الدر المختار بعد المنع من الجهر: وهذا للخواص، وأما العوام فلا يمنعون من تكبير ولا تنفل أصلا، لقلة رغبتهم في الخيرات. بحر. قوله: فلا يمنعون لا تحسن المقابلة، إلا لو قال فلا يكره في حقهم، وقد يقال ما ذكره لازم عدم الكراهة.

¹ Narrated by Abū Dāwūd.

² Narrated by Tirmidhī.

وقوله: أصلاً، أي لا سرا ولا جهراً في التكبير. شامي. هذا ما عندي، والله عليم بما عنده.¹

Proof for murāqabah

Similarly, murāqabah is a type of dhikr. Murāqabah is a supervisor of the heart. Shaykh ‘Azīz ad-Dīn *rahimahullāh* saw Hadrat Maḥbūb Ilāhī in a dream. The latter said to him: “O ‘Azīz ad-Dīn! You must make it a habit to fast, and keep fast of the heart.” When Shaykh ‘Azīz ad-Dīn *rahimahullāh* related this dream to Hadrat Chirāgh Dehlawī rahimahullāh, the latter said: “Hadrat is instructing you to engage in murāqabah.”²

Murāqabah of the heart is proven from the Hadīth.

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال: كنت رديف رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال: يا غلام! احفظ الله تجده تجاهك. وفي هذا الحديث: فإن استطعت أن تعمل لله تعالى بالرضاء في اليقين فافعل، فإن لم تستطع فإن في الصبر على ما تكره خيراً كثيراً. أخرجه رزين بهذا اللفظ.

Hadrat Ibn ‘Abbās radiyallāhu ‘anhu narrates: I was sitting behind Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam on the same conveyance when he said to me: “O boy! Be constant in thinking of Allāh and you will find Him before you.” This Hadīth also contains: “If you are able to do for Allāh’s pleasure with conviction, you must do it. If you cannot do it, then there is still a lot of good in exercising patience over displeasing matters.”

The practice of murāqabah: The meaning of the words “Be constant in thinking of Allāh” is the essence of

¹ *Imdād al-Fatāwā*, vol. 5, pp. 154-155.

² *Tārīkh Mashā’ikh Chisht*, vol. 1, p. 334.

murāqabah which is the essential practice of the Sufis. As for the specific manner of murāqabah, it is only prescribed to entrench it and is not the objective in itself. There is therefore no need for the specific manner to be established from the texts.¹

عن أبي عبد الله بن أبي بكر: أن أبا طلحة الأنصاري كان يصلي في حائط له، فطار دبسي، فطفق يتردد ويلتمس مخرجا فلا يجد، فأعجب أبا طلحة ذلك، فتبعه بصره ساعة، ثم رجع إلى صلاته، فإذا هو لا يدري كم صلى؟ فقال: لقد أصابني في مالي هذا فتنة، فجاء إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فذكر له الذي أصابه في صلاته، فقال: يا رسول الله! هو صدقة، فضعه حيث شئت. أخرجه مالك.

‘Abdullāh ibn Abī Bakr narrates that Hadrat Abū Talḥah Anṣārī *radīyallāhu ‘anhu* was performing salāḥ in his orchard when a bird (or wild pigeon) flew in. It began flying around, searching for an exit but could not find one. Abū Talḥah was pleased by this (i.e. his orchard was so dense that a bird found it difficult to come out of it). He continued looking at it for some time and then turned his attention to his salāḥ, but he could not recall how many rak‘ats he had performed. He said to himself: “This wealth of mine has put me through a severe test (in the sense that I could not concentrate in my salāḥ).” He went to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam and related to him what transpired while he was performing salāḥ, and added: “O Rasūlullāh! I am giving this orchard in charity, you may spend it [in Allāh’s cause] as you wish.”

The practice of murāqabah of the heart: One of the practices of the Sufis is to constantly supervise and monitor the heart. They check its present condition

¹ *At-Takashshuf*, p. 435.

and when they find any change in it, they make up for it. The praiseworthiness of this action is obvious from the action of this Sahābī and Rasūlullāh's approval of it. After all, his coming to his senses was a result of his murāqabah, as is clear from this incident.¹

The virtue of pondering and reflecting

Hadrat Ibn 'Abbās *radiyallāhu 'anhu* said: "An hour of pondering is superior to one night's worship." The same has been narrated from Hadrat Abū Dardā' and Hadrat Anas *radiyallāhu 'anhumā*. Hadrat Anas *radiyallāhu 'anhu* also said: "An hour of pondering is superior to 80 years' worship." Someone asked Hadrat Umm Dardā' *radiyallāhu 'anhā*: "What was the most superior act of worship of Hadrat Abū Dardā'?" She replied: "Pondering and reflecting." Hadrat Abū Hurayrah *radiyallāhu 'anhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: "An hour of pondering and reflecting is superior to 60 years' worship."

These narrations do not mean that the need for worship no longer remains. No matter what the status of an act of worship – fard or wājib, Sunnat or mustahab – leaving it out will deserve that amount of warning, punishment or reprimand.

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* has written that pondering and reflecting is said to be superior to worship because in addition to it already containing the meaning of dhikr in it, it contains two more points: (1) Recognition of Allāh *ta'ālā* because pondering and reflecting is the key to His recognition. (2) Love of Allāh *ta'ālā*. Reflection inevitably leads to love. This is the very same pondering and reflecting

¹ *At-Takashshuf*, p. 422.

which the Sufis refer to as murāqabah. Its virtue is established from many narrations.¹

Murāqabah is a fundamental pillar

‘Allāmah Ibn Qayyim Jauzī *rahimahullāh* said that murāqabah is the fundamental pillar from among the actions of the heart. He writes: “Murāqabah is the fountainhead of actions of the heart and the stations of Dīn.” He quotes the Hādīth on *ihsān*² as evidence. While explaining how to direct tranquillity to one’s self, he writes:

فإن قلت: قد ذكرت أقسامها ونتيجتها وثمرتها وعلامتها، فما أسبابها الجالبة لها؟
قلت: سببها استيلاء مراقبة العبد لربه جل جلاله حتى كأنه يراه، وكلما اشتدت
هذه المراقبة أوجبت له من الحياء والسكينة والمحبة والخضوع والخشوع والخوف
والرجاء ما لا يحصل بدونها، فالمراقبة أساس الأعمال القلبية كلها، وعمودها الذي
قيامها به. ولقد جمع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أصول أعمال القلب وفروعها كلها
في كلمة واحدة، وهي قوله في الإحسان: أن تعبد الله كأنك تراه. فتأمل كل مقام من
مقامات الدين، وكل عمل من أعمال القلوب، كيف تجد هذه أصله ومنبعه!³

To sum up, collective loud dhikr and murāqabah are not bid‘at acts; they are permissible.

The following footnote is contained in the above-quoted text of *Imdād al-Fatāwā*:

However, the precondition is that it [loud dhikr] must not disturb any sleeping person or a person who is in

¹ *Faḍā’il-e-A’māl*, vol. 1, pp. 360-361.

² Reference is made to the Hādīth which is popularly known as Hādīth-e-Jibra’īl.

³ اعلام الموقعين، الفصل الثاني، كلام الأئمة في أدوات الفتيا وشروطها، ج ١، ص ٧٠.

salāh. Furthermore, it must not be too loud. If any shaykh asks a murīd to engage in very loud dhikr, then in addition to the precondition of it not disturbing anyone, the loud dhikr must not be considered to be the objective of proximity. Rather, it must be considered to be based on certain special wisdoms which are known to the Sufi masters.¹

Similarly, if it is considered essential to attend assemblies of dhikr, if those who do not attend are criticized, or some other impermissible act is committed, then in such a case dhikr of this type is prohibited.

نعم الجهر المفرط ممنوع شرعا، وكذا الجهر الغير المفرط إذا كان فيه إيذاء لأحد من نائم أو مصل، أو حصلت فيه شبهة رياء، أو لوحظت فيه خصوصيات غير مشروعة، أو التزم كالتزام الملتمزمات، فكم من مباح يصير بالالتزام غير لزوم، والتخصيص من غير مخصص مكروها، كما صرح به علي القاري في شرح المشكاة والحصكفي في الدر المختار وغيرهما.^٢

Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* has gone into a lengthy discussion on collective dhikr in his book. He states that collective dhikr is permissible. Similarly, 'Allāmah Khayr ad-Dīn Ramli *rahimahullāh* states in *Fatāwā Khayrīyyah* that collective dhikr is supported from Aḥādīth. There is therefore no doubt whatsoever as regards its permissibility. The texts of both these scholars are presented here:

¹ *Imdād al-Fatāwā*, vol. 5, p. 154.

^٢ سباحة الفكر في الجهر بالذكر، ص ٢٦.

ومنهم الشيخ عبد الحق الدهلوي، حيث أورد في رسالته المسماة "بتوصيل المرید إلى المراد، بیان أحكام الأحزاب والأورد" كلاماً طويلاً بالفارسية في جوازه، وأنا أذكره معرباً، فنقول:

الجهر الإعلان بالذكر والتلاوة، والإجتماع للذكر في المجالس والمساجد جائز ومشروع، لحديث: "من ذكرني في ملاً ذكرته في ملاً خير منه"، وقوله تعالى: "كذکرکم اباءکم او اشد ذکرًا". أيضاً يمكن دليلاً له، وفي صحيح البخاري: عن ابن عباس أنه قال: كنا لا نعرف انصراف الناس من الصلاة في عهد رسول الله إلا بالذكر جهراً^١.

وفي الفتاوى الخيرية: سئل من دمشق من الشيخ أبراهيم، فيما اعتاده السادة الصوفية من: حلق الذكر والجهر به في المساجد من جماعة ورثوا ذلك من ابائهم وأجدادهم، وينشدون القصائد الصوفية، وثم من يعترض عليهم ويقول: لا يجوز الإنشاد، وكذا رفع الصوت بالذكر، فهل اعتراضه موافق للحكم الشرعي؟

فأجاب: حلق الذكر والجهر به، وإنشاد القصائد، قد جاء في الحديث ما اقتضى طلبه، نحو: "وإن ذكرني في ملاً ذكرته في ملاً خير منه"، رواه البخاري ومسلم والترمذي والنسائي وابن ماجه وأحمد بإسناد صحيح. والذكر في الملاً لا يكون إلا عن جهر، وكذا حلق الذكر وطواف الملائكة بها، وما ورد فيها من الأحاديث^٢.

Collective Qur'an recitation

You presented a comparison between collective dhikr and collective Qur'an recitation which is not correct. If collective Qur'an recitation is done without adhering to customs, family pressure, specific dates and days,

^١ سباحة الفكر في الجهر بالذكر، ص ٣٦.

^٢ سباحة الفكر في الجهر بالذكر، ص ٢٨.

without insisting on inviting people and without ensuring that people gather for it, then it is permissible. Those 'ulamā' who said that collective Qur'ān recitation is impermissible said it on this basis.

وأما الإجتماع لتلاوة فهو ثابت من حديث: ما اجتمع قوم في بيت من بيوت الله يقرؤون القرآن ويتدارسونه إلا حفت بهم الملائكة. صحح النووي وغيره. ومن ههنا أخذوا جواز قراءة الأحزاب والأوراد في المساجد والمجالس. وذهب مالك وأصحابه إلى كراهة جميع هذه الأمور لعدم عمل السلف بها، ولسد الذرائع، وقطع مواد البدعة، لئلا تلزم الزيادة في الدين والخروج عن الحق المبين، وقد وقع في زماننا هذا ما خافه واتقاه. انتهى كلامه بتعريبه.¹

Types of Bay'at

Question: As far as I know, there are three types of bay'at: (1) Bay'at on jihād. (2) Bay'at on accepting Islam. (3) Bay'at on steadfastness on doing good and abstaining from evils. Is it correct to confine it to these three or are there other types of bay'at as well? Explain in detail.

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Answer: There are further details as regards the third type of bay'at mentioned in your question. Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muḥaddith Dehlawī rahimahullāh writes:

¹ اسباحة الفكر في الجهر بالذكر، ص ٦٥، ٦٦.

فاعلم أن البيعة المتوارثة بين الصوفية على وجوه: أحدها بيعة التوبة من المعاصي، والثاني: بيعة التبرك في سلسلة الصالحين بمنزلة سلسلة إسناد الحديث، فإن فيها بركة، والثالث: بيعة تؤكد العزيمة على التجرد لأمر الله وترك ما نهى عنه ظاهراً وباطناً، وتعليق القلب بالله تعالى وهو الأصل.

There are several types of bay'at which are in vogue among the Sufis: (1) Bay'at of repentance from sins. (2) Bay'at of obtaining blessings by entering into the spiritual lineage of the righteous. This is similar to the chain of transmission of Hadīth, for surely there is blessedness in it. (3) Bay'at of reaffirming one's determination to carry out Allāh's orders and abstain from His prohibitions externally and internally, and to attach one's heart to Allāh ta'ālā. This third type is the fundamental.

وأما الأولان فالوفاء بالبيعة فيهما ترك الكبائر وعدم الإصرار على الصغائر، والتمسك بالطاعات المذكورة من الواجبات والسنن الرواتب والنكث بالإخلال فيما ذكرنا.

As for the first two types, loyalty to one's bay'at entails abstaining from major sins, abstaining from persistence in committing minor sins, and holding on firmly to the previously mentioned acts of obedience which are obligatory and Sunnat-e-mu'akkadah. As for breaking one's allegiance, it entails shortcomings in what we mentioned, i.e. committing major sins, persisting in minor sins, and inattention towards acts of obedience.

وأما الثالث فالوفاء البقاء على هذه الهجرة والمجاهدة، حتى يكون متنوراً بنور السكينة، ويصير ذلك ديناً له وخلقاً وجبلة، فعند ذلك قد يرخص فيما أباحه

الشرع من اللذات والإشغال ببعض ما يحتاج إلى طول التعهد كالتدريس والقضاء والنكث بالإخلال في ذلك.

As for the third type, loyalty to one's bay'at entails keeping away from desires and remaining firm on striving and spiritual exercises until the person is enlightened with the light of tranquillity, and it becomes embedded as his habit, disposition and temperament. On reaching this level, he is sometimes given permission to indulge in those pleasures which the Sharī'at has permitted and to become occupied in some of those works which require lengthy periods of time, such as teaching Dīnī sciences and passing judgements. The bay'at is broken when one causes defects in this before the heart can be enlightened.¹

¹ *Shifā' al-'Alīl (tarjumah) Qaul al-Jamīl*, pp. 18-19.

CONCLUSION

From the 14 questions in your query with regard to the practices of the Tablighī Jamā'at and the Khānqāh, it is gauged that you consider a gulf between the practices of the Tablighī Jamā'at and the practices of the Sufis. Whereas in reality this is not the case. The principles and regulations which Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* laid down for the Tablighī Jamā'at and whatever is acquired from them through practical application with moderation is the same which is acquired from taṣawwuf. For example, the first point of the six points of the Tablighī Jamā'at is the *kalimah tayyibah*, and the third point is knowledge and dhikr. Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes with reference to *kalimah tayyibah*:

This is that pure *kalimah* around which the millstone of Dīn revolves. This is why the Sufis and Gnostics pay due importance to it and give preference to it over all other forms of dhikr.¹

There are not thousands but millions of Sufi shaykhs, and each one has numerous murīds. Almost all of them have in their daily practices the practice of repeating the *kalimah tayyibah* thousands of times. *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl* states that the word "Allāh" has to be repeated at least 5 000 times and there is no limit to the maximum number. And according to the Sufis, it has to be repeated 25 000 times." As regards *Lā ilāha illallāh*, it has to be repeated at least 5 000 times

¹ *Fadā'il-e-A'māl*, vol. 1, p. 388.

daily. This number is more or less prescribed constantly by the Sufis.¹

Imdād as-Sulūk states:

It is obligatory on a seeker to be fully conversant with the principles of Dīn so that his recognition, servitude and worship become correct.²

The fourth point [among the six points of Tabligh] is kindness to a Muslim. The essence of it is to be considerate of the rights of fellow humans and to fulfil them whenever the occasion demands. Each person must be treated according to his rank.

Imdād as-Sulūk states:

The characteristics of the Sufis are: forbearance, humility, concern and kindness, bearing insults and softness, giving preference to the benefit of others over one's own benefit, rendering services to others, affection, giving glad tidings, nobleness, discarding position and wealth, gallantry, love and generosity, pardoning, reconciliation, open-heartedness and loyalty, modesty and subtlety, having a smiling and pleasant countenance, tranquillity and dignity, supplicating for people and praising them, pleasantness, considering one's self to be insignificant, according respect to one's brothers, respect for the mashā'ikh, kindness to one's juniors, considering the favours of

¹ *Faḍā'il-e-A'māl*, vol. 1, p. 403.

² *Imdād as-Sulūk*, p. 160.

others to be great and one's own favours to be insignificant.¹

The fifth point [among the six points of Tablīgh] is sincerity of intention. It means that every action must be done solely to please Allāh *ta'ālā*. While explaining the essence of Sufism, Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Zakarīyyā Sāhib rahimahullāh writes:

“Actions are based on intentions” is the starting point of Sufism and its peak is “that you worship Allāh as though you can see Him”. This is known as affinity, remembrance and consciousness of Allāh.²

Similarly, part of the course of the Tablīghī Jamā'at is for a person to spend 40 days. This is also found among the Sufis. A good act which is carried out for 40 days bears many good fruits and brings excellent results. A person develops a special attachment of the heart to that act. This is established from the Hadīth and has been experienced by many senior Sufi masters.

At-Takashshuf states:

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: من أخلص لله أربعين صباحا، ظهرت ينابيع الحكمة من قلبه على لسانه. أخرجه رزين.

Hadrat Ibn 'Abbās radiyallāhu 'anhu narrates that *Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said: *The person who remains devoted to Allāh ta'ālā for 40 days (in worshipping Him) will experience fountains of knowledge emanating from his heart and appearing on his tongue. Narrated by Razīn.*

¹ *Imdād as-Sulūk*, p. 156.

² *Āp Betī*, part 2, *Yād-e-Ayyām*, vol. 1, p. 79.

Most elders pay particular attention to 40 days' of solitude. This Hadīth is the basis for this practice.¹

In the same way, by going out in a jamā'at, a person gradually learns how to exercise patience over the characteristics and actions of inappropriate people, show consideration to his companions, desire the wellbeing of the creation in general, accord respect to elders, show affection to juniors, obey the amīr, see to the needs of those under him, develop the habit and importance of mutual consultation, and various other characteristics and prophetic teachings. The person gradually begins to understand Dīn in its entirety and gets the inspiration to practise on it. The desire to sacrifice and endeavour for Dīn becomes firmly embedded in him.²

The Sufī masters also instruct and teach the above-mentioned characteristics. Now you yourself can decide and see the extent of unity and harmony which exists between the Tablīghī work and the Khānqāh activities!

Tablīghī Work is The Convergence of The Activities of The Chishtī Masters

It will not be wrong if we said that Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib rahimahullāh absorbed the Sufism of the Chishtī masters into his Tablīgh work without using their terminologies bearing in mind the level of the masses. The testimony of two Indian historians is presented to emphasize this point.

Professor Khalīq Aḥmad Nizāmī writes in his well-known book, *Tārīkh Mashā'ikh Chisht:*

¹ *At-Takashshuf*, p. 433.

² *Fatāwā Maḥmūdīyyah*, vol. 4, p. 225.

In the present times, Hadrat Maulānā Ilyās Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* fully understood the principles of rectification of the Chishtī masters and practised on them. He issued the following guideline during his final illness: “Remember! The evils of Muslims cannot be stopped by speaking about their evils. Rather, whatever little good is in them must be proliferated. In this way, the evil will be removed automatically.”¹

A valuable portion of Hadrat Maulānā Abūl Hasan ‘Alī Nadwī’s life was spent in the company of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and he used to visit him frequently. He observed the Tablighī movement very closely. Not only that, he was experiencing a mental conflict on account of the movement of Abul A’lā Maudūdī. The blessed company of Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and his Tablighī movement which was based on sincerity proved to be the effective causes for his separation and departure from the movement of Abul A’lā Maudūdī. Hadrat Maulānā Abul Hasan ‘Alī Nadwī *rahimahullāh* writes:

The firmer my perceptions became and the wider my studies and experiences became, the more my mental conflict increased. Its peak was at the time when I began frequenting the company of Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, the founder of the Tablighī movement. When I was deeply affected by his life, spiritual

¹ Hadrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās Aur Oen Kī Dīnī Da’wat, p. 155 as quoted from *Tārīkh Mashā’ikh Chisht*, vol. 1, p. 335.

conditions, and his call to īmān and self-reckoning, this mental gulf deepened and widened. And I began to perceive what the temperament and traits ought to be of the one who is bearing the call of prophethood. And how different it was from that movement which was based solely on studies, intelligence, a certain philosophy, and in response to a certain system!?...Once when I wrote to Maulānā Maudūdī about my mental conflict from Lucknow, and he also learnt about my deep influence by Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās *Sāhib rahimahullāh* and my ever increasing engrossment with the Tablighī work, then not only did he [Maulānā Maudūdī] permit me to remain devoted to it [Tablighī work] but advised me to do it.¹

Now observe his following words after the above prelude:

Eventually, the blessings of the Chishtī spiritual family became universal through the Tablighī movement of Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās *rahimahullāh*. Professor Khaliq Aḥmad Nizāmī correctly writes in *Tārīkh Mashā'ikh Chisht*:

In the last century, no elder absorbed the principles of rectification of the Chishtī spiritual family as was done by Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās *rahimahullāh*.²

Note: In the conclusion, we tried to present the outward harmony which exists between the Tablighī

¹ *Purāne Chirāgh*, vol. 2, p. 314.

² *Tārīkh Da'wat Wa 'Azīmat*, vol. 3, p. 49.

work and Khānqāh activities through a few examples. This most definitely does not mean that if the objective of the Khānqāh is acquired through the Tablighī movement, then there is no need to present one's self to the mashā'ikh of the Khānqāh for one's rectification. If anyone comes to this conclusion, then it will not be based on his misunderstanding but his wayward and deviated thinking.

In the prelude to this query we explained in detail that a person's spiritual rectification can never be achieved through any movement. That is all. Allāh *ta'ālā* knows best.

'Abd al-Qayyūm Rājkaūtī, *may Allāh pardon him*.
Assistant Muftī, Jāmi'ah Islāmīyyah Ta'līm ad-Dīn,
Dhābel, Gujarat, India.
20 Rajab al-Murajjab 1435 A.H.

I concur with the answer.
Aḥmad Khānpūrī, *may Allāh pardon him*.

I concur with the answer.
'Abbās Dāwūd Bismillāh.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

English translation completed on 29 Rabī' al-Awwal 1437 A.H./10 January 2016. We pray to Allāh *ta'ālā* to accept this humble effort and to make it a source of our salvation in this world and in the Hereafter.

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

As with all human endeavours, there are bound to be errors, mistakes and slip-ups in the translation. I humbly request the reader to inform me of them so that these could be corrected in future editions. Constructive criticism and suggestions will be highly appreciated. I can be contacted via e-mail: maulanamahomedy@gmail.com

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